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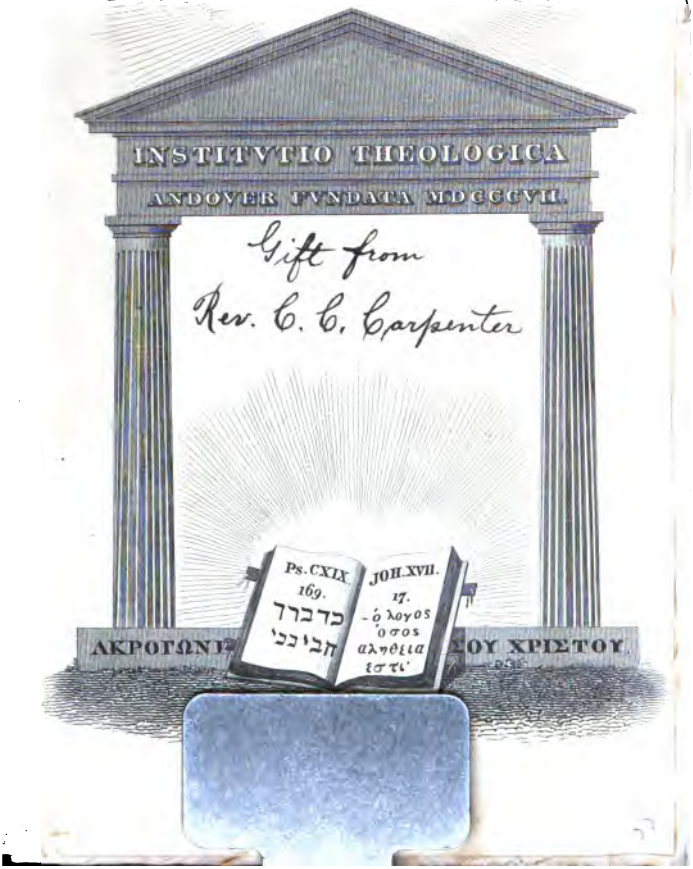
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New York ... John F Haven

THE

BLESSEDNESS

OF THE

RIGHTEOUS OPENED,

AND FURTHER

RECOMMENDED FROM THE CONSIDERATION

OF THE

VANITY OF THIS MORTAL LIFE.

IN TWO TREATISES,

ON PSALM XVII. 15. AND PSALM LXXXIX. 47.

WHEN HE SHALL APPEAR, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM, FOR WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS, 1 JOHN iii. 2.

Ἀλλὰ τὰ κακὰ οὐ δυνατὸν ἐν θεοῖς ἱδρύσθαι τὴν δὲ θνητὴν φύσιν, καὶ τόνδε τὸν τόπον περιπολεῖ ἐξ ἀναγκης. Διὸ καὶ πειρασθαι χρὴ ἐνθένδε ἐκεῖσε φεύγειν ὅτι τάχιστα. Φυγὴ δὲ ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν, ὁμοίωσις δὲ δίκαιον, καὶ ὅσιον μετὰ φρονήσεως γένεσθαι. Plat. in Theæt.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THAT eminent divine, the late ROBERT HALL, said of the "*Blessedness of the Righteous*," "Perhaps Baxter's 'Saint's Rest,' is fitted to make a deeper impression on the majority of readers. Baxter enforces particular ideas with extraordinary clearness, force, and earnestness. His appeals to the conscience are irresistible. *Howe*, again, is distinguished by calmness, self-possession, majesty, and comprehensiveness; and, for my own part, I decidedly prefer him to Baxter."

TO THE READER.

I AM not at all solicitous, that the world should know the history of the conception of this treatise. If there be any thing that shall recompense the pains of such as may think fit to give themselves the trouble of perusing it, in the work itself, I should yet think it too much an undervaluing of them, if I did reckon the minuter circumstances relating thereto, fit matter for their entertainment. Nor am I more concerned to have it known what were the inducements to the publication of it. Earnest protestations and remonstrances of our good intentions in such undertakings, as they leave men still at liberty to believe or doubt at their pleasure; so they gain us little if they be believed. It is no easy matter, to carry one even, constant tenour of spirit through a work of time. Nor is it more easy to pass a settled invariable judgment concerning so variable a subject; when a heart that may seem wholly framed and set for God this hour, shall look so quite like another thing the next, and change figures and postures almost as often as it doth thoughts. And if a man should be mistaken in judging himself, it would little mend the matter, to have deceived others also into a good opinion of him. But if he can approve himself to God in the simplicity of an honest and undeceived heart, the peace that ensues is a secret between God and him. *They are theatre enough to one another, as he said to his friend. 'Tis an enclosed pleasure: a joy which the stranger cannot intermeddle with.

* Seneca.

'Tis therefore any man's concernment herein rather to satisfy himself than the world. And the world's, rather to understand the design of the work than the author; and whither it tends, rather than whereto he meant it. And 'tis obvious enough, to what good purposes discourses of this nature may serve. This is, in the design of it, wholly practical; hath little or nothing to do with disputation. If there be any whose business it is to promote a private, divided interest; or who place the sum of their religion in an inconsiderable and doubtful opinion; it doth not unhallow their altars, nor offer any affront to their idol. It intends no quarrel to any contending angry party; but deals upon things in the substance whereof Christians are at a professed agreement. And hath therefore the greater probability of doing good to some, without the offence of any. 'Tis indeed equally matter of complaint and wonder, that men can find so much leisure to divert from such things, wherein there is so much both of importance and pleasure, unto (what one would think should have little of temptation or allurement in it) contentious jangling. It might rather be thought its visible fruits and tendencies should render it the most dreadful thing to every serious beholder. What tragedies hath it wrought in the Christian church! Into how weak and languishing a condition hath it brought the religion of professed Christians! Hence have risen the intemperate, preternatural heats and angers that have spent its strength and spirits, and make it look with so meagre and pale a face. We have had a greater mind to dispute than live; and to contend about what we know not, than to practise the far greater things we know; and which more directly tend to nourish and maintain the divine life. The author of that ingenious sentence,* (whoever he were,) hath fitly expressed what is the noisome product of the itch of disputing. It hath begot the ulcerous tumours, which, besides their own

* Pruritus disputandi scabies Ecclesiæ.

offensive soreness, drain the body, and turn what should nourish that into nutriment to themselves. And its effects are not more grievous than the pleasures which it effects and pursues are uncouth and unnatural. *The rough touch of an ungentle hand. That only pleases which exasperates (as the moralist aptly expresses some like disaffection of diseased minds.) Toil and vexation is their only delight. What to a sound spirit would be a pain, is to these a pleasure.

Which is, indeed, the triumph of the disease, that it adds unto torment, reproach and mockery, and imposes upon men by so ridiculous a delusion (while they are made to take pleasure in punishing themselves) that even the most sober can scarce look on in a fitter posture, than with a compassionate smile. All which were yet somewhat more tolerable, if that imagined, vanishing pleasure were not the whole of their gain; or if it were to be hoped, that so great a present real pain and smart, should be recompensed with as real a consequent fruit and advantage. But we know, that generally by how much any thing is more disputable, the less it is necessary or conducible to the Christian life. God hath graciously provided that what we are to live by, should not cost us so dear. And possibly, as there is less occasion of disputing about the more momentous things of religion; so there may be somewhat more of modesty and awe in reference to what is so confessedly venerable and sacred, (though too many are over bold even here also,) than so foolishly to trifle with such things. Therefore more commonly, where that humour prevails, men divert from those plainer things, with some slighter and superficial reverence to them, but more heartily esteeming them insipid and jejune, because they have less in them to gratify that appetite, and betake themselves to such things about

* Ut ulcera quædam nocituras manus appetunt et tactu gaudent, et fœdam corporum scabiem delectat quicquid exasperat: Non aliter dixerim his mentibus in quas voluptates volut mala ulcera eruperunt voluptatii esse laborem, vexationemque. Sen. de Tranquillitate Animi.

which they may more plausibly contend: and then, what pitiful trifles oftentimes take up their time and thoughts; questions and problems of like weighty importance, very often, with those which, the above-named author* tells us, this disease among the Greeks prompted them to trouble themselves about, as, "What number of rowers Ulysses had? Which was written first, the Iliad or the Odysses, &c.? So that (as he saith) they spent their lives very operously doing nothing. Their conceits being such, that if they kept them to themselves, they could yield them no fruit; and if they published them to others, they should not seem thereby the more learned, but the more troublesome" to this purpose he truly speaks. And is it not to be resented, that men should sell away the solid strength and vital joy which a serious soul would find in substantial religion, for such toys! Yea, and not only famish themselves but trouble the world, and embroil the church with their impertinences! If a man be drawn forth to defend an important truth against an injurious assault, it were treacherous self-love to purchase his own peace by declining it. Or if he did sometimes turn his thoughts to some of our petty questions, that with many are so hotly agitated, for recreation sake, or to try his wit and exercise his reason, without stirring his passions to the disturbance of others or himself; 'twere an innocent divertisement, and the best purpose that things of that nature are capable of serving. But when contention becomes a man's element, and he cannot live out of that fire; strains his wit and racks his invention to find matter of quarrel; is resolved, nothing said or done by others shall please him, only because he means to please himself in dissenting; disputes only that he may dispute, and loves dissension for itself: this is the unnatural humour that hath so unspeakably troubled the church, and dispirited religion, and filled men's souls with wind and vanity; yea, with fire and

* Sen. de Brev. Vit.

fury. This hath made Christians gladiators, and the Christian world a clamorous theatre, while men have equally affected to contend, and to make ostentation of their ability so to do.

And, surely, as it is highly pleasurable to retire oneself, so it is charitable to call aside others out of this noise and throng, to consider silently and feed upon the known and agreed things of our religion; which immediately lead to both the duties and delights of it. Among which there are none more evident and undoubted, none less entangled with controversy, none more profitable and pleasant, than the future blessedness of the righteous, which this discourse treats of. The last end is a matter so little disputable, that 'tis commonly thought (which is elsewhere more distinctly spoken to) not to be the object of election, and so not of deliberation consequently, but of simple intention only, because men are supposed to be generally agreed as touching that. And the knowledge and intention of it is apparently the very soul of religion; animates, directs, enlivens, and sweetens the whole thereof. Without which, religion were the vainest, most irrational, and most unsavoury thing in the world. For what were there left of it, but an empty unaccountable formality, a series of spiritless and merely scenical observances and actions without a design? For whereas all men's actions else, mediately tend to the last end, but that not being in view with the most, they pitch upon other intervenient ends; which, though abstracted from the last, should not be; yet they are actually to them the reason of their actions, and infuse a vigour and liveliness into them: religion aiming immediately at the last end, that being taken away, hath no rational end or design at all. And it cannot but be a heartless business, with great solemnity, in a continued course, to do nothing but professedly trifle, or keep up a custom of certain solemn performances which have no imaginable scope or end. And because the more clearly this our last end is

understood, the more powerfully and sweetly it attracts and moves the soul, this treatise endeavours to give as plain and positive a state and notion of it as the text insisted on, compared with other Scriptures, would afford to so weak an eye.

And because men are so apt to abuse themselves with the vain and self-contradicting hopes of attaining this end, without ever having their spirits framed to it, or walking in the way that leads thereto, as if they could come to heaven by chance, or without any design or care of theirs; the proportion is endeavoured to be shown, between that Divine likeness, in the vision and participation whereof this blessedness consists, and the righteousness that disposes and leads to it. Which may it be monitory to the ungodly and profane, who hate and scorn the likeness of God wherever they behold it. And let me tell such from (better-instructed) pagans, *That* there is nothing more like or more acceptable to God, than a man that is in the temper of his soul truly good, who excels other men, as he is himself excelled* (pardon this hyperbole) *by the immortal God. That† between God and good men there is a friendship, by means of virtue; a friendship, yea, a kindred, a likeness; in as much truly as the good man differs from God but in time,* (here sprinkle a grain or two) *being his disciple, imitator, and very off-spring. That‡ God is full of indignation against such as reproach one that is like to him, or that praise one that is contrarily affected;* (or unlike;) *but such is the good man* (*i. e.* he is one like God.) *A good man* (as it shortly after follows) *is the holiest thing in the world, and a wicked man the most polluted thing.*

And let me warn such haters of holiness and holy

* Nihil est Deo simílius aut gratius quam vir animo perfecte bonus, &c. Apul. de Deo Socratis.

† Inter bonos viros ac Deum Amicitia est, conciliante virtute amicitiam dico? etiam necessitudo, et similitudo, &c. Sen. de Prov.

‡ Νεμεσα γαρ ο θεος οταν τις ψεγη τον εαυτωι ομοιον, η επαινη τον εαυτωι εναντιως εχοντα, εστι δ' ουτος ο αγαθος.—παντων ιερωτατον εστιν ανθρωπος αγαθος, και μιαρωτατον ο πονηρος. Plat. in Minoe.

men in the words of this author immediately subjoined;* *And this I say for this cause, that thou being but a man, the son of a man, no more offend in speaking against a hero, one who is a son of God.*

Methinks men should be ashamed to profess the belief of a life to come, while they cannot behold without indignation, nor mention but with derision, that holiness without which it can never be attained, and which is indeed the seed and principle of the thing itself. But such are not likely much to trouble themselves with this discourse. There is little in it indeed of art or ornament to invite or gratify such as the subject itself invites not. And nothing at all but what was apprehended might be some way useful. The affectation of garnishing a margin with the names of authors, I have ever thought a vain pedantry; yet have not declined the occasional use of a few that occurred. He that writes to the world, must reckon himself debtor to the wise and unwise. If what is done shall be found with any to have promoted its proper end; his praises to God shall follow it (as his prayers do that it may) who professes himself,

A well-willer to the souls of men.
J. HOWE.

* Τουτου δ' ενεκα φρασω, ινα μη ανθρωπος ων ανθρωπου, εις ηρω Διος ιων λογωεξαμαρτανης.

CHRISTIAN READER.

You whose hearts are set on heaven, who are daily laying up a treasure there, here is a welcome messenger, to tell you more than perhaps you have well considered, of the nature of your future blessedness, and to illustrate the map of the land of promise, and to bring you another cluster of its grapes: here is a useful help to make you know that holiness doth participate of glory, and that heaven is at least virtually in the seed of grace. Though this life be properly called a life of faith, as contradistinct from the intuition and fruition hereafter, as well as from the lower life of sense; yet it is a great truth, and not sufficiently considered and improved, that we have here more than faith, to acquaint us with the blessedness expected. Between faith and glory, there is the spirit of holiness, the love of God, the heavenly desires, which are kindled by faith, and are those branches on which the happy flower and fruit must grow: they are the name and mark of God upon us: they are our earnest, our pledge, and the first-fruits. And is not this more than a word of promise only? Therefore though all Christians must live by faith, marvel not that I tell you, that you may, you must, have more than faith. Is not a pledge and earnest, a first-fruits, more? Therefore have Christians not only a Spirit to evidence their title, but also some foretaste of heaven itself. For faith in Christ is to recover us to God; and so much as we have of God, so much of fruition; and so much as faith hath kindled in you of the love of God, so much foretaste you have of heaven; for you are deceived, if you think, that any one notion speaketh more to you of heaven, and of your ultimate end, than *the love of God.* And though

no unsound ill-grounded faith will serve to cause this sacred love, yet when it is caused, it over-tops this cause; and he that perceiveth the operations of a strong effectual love, hath an acquaintance with God and heaven which is above that of believing. Faith seeth the feast, but love is the tasting of it. And therefore it is, that the holiest souls stick closest unto God, because (though their reasoning faculty may be defective) they know him by the highest and most tenacious kind of knowledge which this world affordeth (as I have lately showed elsewhere.) Here you have described to you, the true witness of the Spirit; not that of supposed internal voices, which they are usually most taken up with, who have the smallest knowledge, and faith, and love, and the greatest self-esteem, or spiritual pride, with the strongest phantasies and passions: but the objective and the sealing testimony, the divine nature, the renewed image of God, whose children are known by being like to their heavenly Father, even by being holy as he is holy. This is the Spirit of adoption, by which we are inclined, by holy love to God and confidence in him, to cry Abba Father, and to fly unto him: the Spirit of sanctification is thereby in us the Spirit of adoption; for both signify but the giving us that love to God, which is the filial nature, and our Father's image.

And this treatise doth happily direct thee to that faithful beholding God in righteousness, which must here begin this blessed assimilation, which full intuition will for ever perfect. It is a happy sign that God is about to repair our ruins and divisions, when he stirreth up his servants to speak so much of heaven; and to call up the minds of impatient complainers, and contentious censurers, and ignorant self-conceited dividers, and of worldly, unskilful, and unmerciful pastors, to look to that state where all the godly shall be one; and to turn those thoughts to the furtherance of holiness, to provoke one another to love and to good works, which too many

lay out upon their hay and stubble; and to call men from judging and despising each other (and worse than both those) about their meats and drinks, and days, to study righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ (in which his kingdom doth consist) is acceptable to God, and approved of men, that are wise and good. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. Whilst the contentious for meats will destroy the work of God, (Rom. xiv. 17—20.) the union between peace and holiness is so strict, that he that truly promoteth one promoteth both, Heb. xii. 14. Jam. iii. 17. The true way of our union is excellently described, Eph. iv. 11—16. If any plain, unlearned readers shall blame the accurateness of the style, they must remember, that those persons have not the least need to hear of heaven, and to be drawn up from the vanities of earth, who cannot digest a looser style. As God hath endued the worthy author with a more than ordinary measure of judiciousness, even soundness and accurateness, of understanding, with seriousness, spirituality, and a heavenly mind; so we have for our common benefit the effects of all these happy qualifications, in this judicious, heavenly discourse. And if my recommendations may in any measure further your acceptance, improvement, and practising of so edifying a treatise, it will answer the ends of him who waiteth with you in hope for the same salvation.

RICHARD BAXTER.

Acton, May 30.

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THE

BLESSEDNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.—Psalm xvii. 15.

CHAPTER I.

A proœmial discourse. A reflection upon some foregoing verses of the Psalm, by way of introduction to the text. A consideration of its somewhat various readings, and of its literal importance. A discussion of its real importance so far as is necessary to the settling the subject of the present discourse.

THE continual mixture of good and evil in this present state of things, with its uncertain fluctuations, and subjection to perpetual changes, do naturally prompt a considering mind to the belief and hope of another, that may be both more perfect and more permanent. For certainly it could never be a design adequate (or any way agreeable) to the Divine wisdom and goodness, that the blessed God should raise such a thing as this lower creation out of nothing, only to give himself the temporary pleasure of beholding the alternate joys and sorrows of (the best part thereof) his reasonable creatures seated in it: nor a delight at all proportionable to an eternally happy Being, when he hath connaturalized such a creature to this sensible world; only to take notice how variously the passions he hath planted in him, may be moved and stirred by the variety of occasions which he shall thence be presented with; and what sudden and contrary impressions may be made upon his easy passive senses, by the interchanged strokes and touches of contrary objects; how quickly he can raise him into a transport of high contentment and pleasure, and then how soon he can again reduce him to a very paroxysm of anguish and despair. It would discover us to have very vile and low thoughts of God, if we did not judge it altogether unanswerable to his perfections, to design no further thing in creating this world, and placing such a creature as man in it, than only to please himself

for a while with such a spectacle, and then at last clear the stage, and shut up all again in an eternal, silent darkness. If we could suppose a man furnished with such power, he would surely add little to the reputation of his being wise or good beyond other men, by a design so to use it. Much less can we think it worthy of God to perpetuate such a state of things as this, and continue a succession of such persons and actions as we now behold in the world, through eternal generations, only to perpetuate to himself the same pleasure in the exercise of his immense power upon created natures, over which he hath so infinite advantage.

And indeed nothing can be more unconceivable, than that the great Creator and Author of all things should frame a creature of so vast comprehension as the spirit of man, put into it a capacity of knowing and conversing with himself, give it some prospect of his own glory and blessedness; raise thereby, in many, boundless unsatisfied desires after him, and unexpressible pleasure in the preconceived hope of being received into the communion of that glory and blessedness; and yet defeat and blast so great an expectation, by the unsuspected reducement of the very subject of it again to nothing. Yea, and that he should deal herein (as in that case he must) the most hardly with the best; and that such souls, whose mere love and devotedness to him had made them abandon the pleasures of this life, and run through whatsoever difficulties for his sake, should fare worse than the very worst; were, beyond all the rest, most utterly unimaginable, and a thought which Pagan reason hath not known how to digest or entertain. *If* (saith one,[a] and he speaks the sense of many others, as well as his own) *with the dissolution of our bodies, the essence of the soul, whatsoever that be, should be dissolved too, and forever cease to be any thing: I know not how I can account them blessed, that never having enjoyed any good as the reward of their virtue, have even perished for virtue itself.*

Wherefore it is consequent, that this present state is only intended for a trial to the spirits of men, in order to their attainment as of a better state in a better world; that is, inasmuch as the infinitely wise and blessed God had given being to such a creature as man, in which both worlds (the material and the immaterial) did meet; and who, in

[a] Ἐι μεν ουν αμα τοις σωμασι διαλυομενοις και το της ψυχης ο τι δε ποτε εστιν εκεινο συνδιαλυεται, &c. Dionys. Halicar. Antiq. Rom. lib. 8.

respect of his earthly and spiritual natures, had in him somewhat suitable to each. And whereas this creature had lost (with his interest) his very inclination to the spiritual objects and enjoyments of the purer immaterial world, (wherein alone his true blessedness could consist,) suffered a vile depression of his spirit unto this gross corporeal world, and hereby brought himself under a necessity of being miserable, his nobler part having nothing now to satisfy it, but what it was become unsuitable and disaffected to. His merciful Creator, being intent upon his restitution, thought fit not to bring it about by a sudden and violent hand; (as it were to catch him into heaven against his will;) but to raise his spirit into its just dominion and sovereignty in him, by such gradual methods as were most suitable to a rational, intelligent nature; that is, to discover to him, that he had such a thing as spirit about him; whence it was fallen, how low it was sunk, to what state it was yet capable to be raised, and what he had designed and done for its happy recovery. And hence, by the secret and powerful insinuations of his own light and grace, to awaken his drowsy and slumbering reason, and incline his perverse and wayward will to the consideration and choice of such things as that felicity consists in; which that better world can afford, and his better part enjoy.

And while he propounds such things to him, how reasonable and agreeable was it, that he should keep him sometimes under a just probation, (yea, how much was there in it of a gracious and compassionate indulgence, often to renew the trial,) whether he would yet bestir himself, and (having so great hopes before him, and such helps and aids afforded him, and ready to be afforded) apply, at last, his intellectual and elective powers, to mind and close with so gracious overtures, in order to his own eternal advancement and blessedness? Nor was it an unreasonable expectation that he should do so. For, however the temporal good and evil that may constantly affect his sensitive part and powers be present and near, but the eternal misery or blessedness of his soul, future and remote; yet, inasmuch as he is capable of understanding the vast disproportion of time and eternity, of a mortal flesh and an immortal spirit, how preposterous a course were it, and unworthy of a man; yea, how dishonourable and reproachful to his Maker, should he prefer the momentary pleasures of narrow, incapacious sense, to the everlasting enjoyments of an enlarged comprehensive spirit! or, for

the avoiding the pains and miseries of the former kind, incur those of the latter! Whence also the holy God doth not expect and require only, that men should make that wiser choice; but doth most justly lay the weight of their eternal states upon their doing or not doing so. And in that day when he shall[b] render to every one according to their works, make this the rule of his final judgment, to allot to them, who by a patient continuance in well-doing seek for honour, glory, and immortality, eternal life. To the rest, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, &c. and that whether they be Jews or Gentiles. Nor is it a new thing in the world, that some among the children of men should in this comply with the righteous will of God, and so judge and choose for themselves, as he is pleased to direct and prescribe. 'Tis a course approved by the concurrent suffrage of all them, in all times and ages, into whose minds the true light hath shined, and whom God hath inspired with that wisdom whereby he maketh wise to salvation. That numerous assembly of the perfected spirits of the just, have agreed in this common resolution; and did in their several generations, ere they had passed this state of trial, with an heroic magnanimity, trample this present world under their feet, and aspire to the glory of the world to come; relieving themselves against all the grievances they have suffered from such, whose portion is in this life, with the alone hope and confidence of what they were to enjoy in another.

And hereof we have an eminent and illustrious instance in this context, where the ground is laid of the following discourse. For introduction whereto, observe that —the title speaks the Psalm a prayer of David. The matter of the prayer is, preservation from his enemies. Not to go over the whole Psalm, we have in the 13 and 14 verses, the sum of his desires, with a description of the persons he prays to be delivered from: in which description every character is an argument to enforce his prayer.

From the wicked: q. d. they are equally enemies to thee and me; not more opposite to me by their cruelty, than by their wickedness they are to thee. Vindicate, then, at once thyself and deliver me.

Thy sword, thy hand. Thou canst as easily command and manage them, as a man may wield his sword, or move his hand. Wilt thou suffer thine own sword, thine own hand, to destroy thine own servant.

b Rom. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

Men of the world, which have their portion in this life: time and this lower world bound all their hopes and fears. They have no serious believing apprehensions of any thing beyond this present life; therefore have nothing to withhold them from the most injurious violence, if thou withhold them not: men that believe not another world, are the ready actors of any imaginable mischiefs and tragedies in this.

Whose belly thou fillest: i. e. their sensual appetite; as oftentimes that term is used[c] *With thy hid treasures: viz.* the riches which either God is wont to hide in the bowels of the earth, or lock up in the repository of Providence, dispensing them at his own pleasure.

They are full of children. So it appears, by that which follows, it ought to be read, and not according to that gross,[d] but easy mistake of some transcribers of the Seventy. As if in all this he had pleaded thus: "Lord, thou hast abundantly indulged those men already, what need they more? They have themselves, from thy unregarded bounty, their own vast swollen desires sufficiently filled, enough for their own time; and when they can live no longer in their persons, they may in their posterity, and leave not strangers, but their numerous offspring, their heirs. Is it not enough that their avarice be gratified, except their malice be also? that they have whatsoever they can conceive desirable for themselves, unless they may also infer whatever they can think mischievous on me?" To this description of his enemies, he *ex opposito*, subjoins some account of himself in this his closure of the Psalm: *As for me.* Here he is at his station-point; and, after some appearing discomposure, his spirit returns to a consistency, in consideration of his own more happy state, which he opposes and prefers to theirs, in the following respects. That *they* were wicked, *he* righteous. "I will behold thy face in righteousness." That *their* happiness was worldly, terrene, such only as did spring from the earth; *his* heavenly and divine, such as should result from the face and image of God. *Theirs* present, temporary, compassed within this life; *his* future, everlasting, to be enjoyed when he should awake. *Theirs* partial, defective, such as would but gratify their bestial part, fill their bellies; *his* adequate, complete, (the *ἐυδαιμονια του συνθετου,*) such as should satisfy the man. "I shall be satisfied," &c.

c Rom. xvi. 18. Phil. iii. 19.
d νων for υιων.

The variety of rendering this verse (to be seen by comparing the original and translation noted in the margin[e]) need not give us any trouble, the differences not being of great moment, nor our own reading liable to exception. The word תמונה about which is the greatest diversity, hath the significancy we here give it, in the second commandment, and constantly elsewhere. And then, what more proper English can this text be capable of, than it hath in our Bibles? Each word hath its true and genuine import; and the syntax is sufficiently regular and grammatical of the whole. Only as to the former, that usual and obvious observation must here have place; that the ב prefixed to צדק and which with it we read *in righteousness*, doth often signify among its various acceptations, *by* or *through*; and that not only as denoting instrumentality, but more at large, the place of any medium necessary to the attainment of the end it subserves to; whence the same use of the Greek ν, that answers thereunto, is wont to go for a Hebraism.

And as to the latter, the only thing liable to controversy, is whether the gerund[f] בהקיץ is to be construed with the person speaking, *when I awake*; or *in my awaking*, or with the *thing*; the likeness or image spoken of *in the awaking of thine image*, or *when thine image shall awake:* and I conceive we need not discuss it, but following our own translation, leave the judgment of it to the ear itself, which, (as Elihu tells us,) trieth words.

In the meantime, the *real* importance of this scripture more calls for discussion than the *literal*; concerning which, a threefold inquiry will be necessary for the settling the subject of the following discourse.—1. What relation this *righteousness* must be understood to have to the vision of God's face, and the other consequent blessedness.—2. What time or state *awaking* refers to, and—3. What is intended by the *likeness of God*. To the *first*. It is only necessary to say at present, that the already noted import of the prepositions *in* being supposed most suitable to this

e אני בצדק אחזה פניך אשבעה בהקיץ תמונתך Sept. Εγω δε εν δικαιοσυνη οφθησομαι, τωι προσωπωι σου χρηματισθησομαι εν τωι ωθησαι την δοξαν σου. The vulgar Latin, *Ego autem in justitia apparebo conspectui tuo, satiabor cum apparuerit gloria tua.* Exactly following the Seventy, as doth the Ethiopic. The Chaldee paraphrase disagrees little; the Arabic less; the Syriac mistook, it seems, תמונתי for אמונתי and so read that word faith which we read likeness.

f Hieronymus (juxta Hebr.) reads the words exactly as we do: *Ego in justitia videbo faciem tuam, implebor, cum evigilavero, similitudine tua.*

g בצדק seems best to be rendered here, *by*, or *through righteousness*, as by the condition in which he may expect the return of God's mercies here, or the eter-

text, (as apparently it is,) righteousness must be looked upon in reference to this vision, not as in an idle or merely casual concomitancy, or as an unconcerned circumstance, that hath nothing to do with the business spoken of; but as in a close and intimate connexion therewith; being, 1. antecedent, 2. conducible, 3. necessary thereto. Nor can I better express its place, and reference to it, generally and in one word, than in saying it qualifies for it; which how it doth, will be more proper to consider hereafter. It may now suffice to say, those words give us the qualified subject of this blessedness, "I in righteousness," a righteous person as such. To the *second:* Taking it for granted, that none will understand this awakening as opposed to natural sleep; in the borrowed or tropical sense, it must be understood to intend either some better state in this life, in comparison whereof the Psalmist reckons his present state but as a sleep; or the future state of blessedness in the other life. There have been some who have understood it of the former, and thought the Psalmist to speak only of a hoped freedom from his present temporal afflictions; but then, that which will be implied, seems not so specious: that trouble and affliction should be signified by the necessarily pre-supposed sleep, which sure doth more resemble rest than trouble.

I conceive it less exceptionable to refer *awaking* to the blessed state of saints after this life. For, that saints, at that time when this was writ, had the knowledge of such a state, (indeed a saint not believing a life to come, is a perfect contradiction,) no doubt can be made by any that hath ever so little read and compared the Old and New Testament. We are plainly told, that those excellent persons mentioned in the famous roll,[h] lived by that faith, which was the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. That of them, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while they lived in Canaan, yet sought a better, a heavenly country, confessing themselves pilgrims, and strangers on earth. We know it was the more general belief of the Jews in our Saviour's time. And whence should they have it, but from the Old Testament? Thither our Saviour[i] remits them to search it out, and the way to it. The apostle Saint Paul[k] gives it as the common faith of the twelve tribes, grounded upon the promise made to

nal vision of him hereafter, &c. So the learned Dr. Hammond, Annot. in loc. quoting also Castellio to the same purpose.

h Heb. xi. 1, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16.

i John v. 39.

k Acts xxvi. & 6, 7, compared with the 8.

their forefathers; and thence prudentially he herein states the cause wherein he was now engaged; supposing it would be generally resented, that he should be called in question for avowing (only) so known and received a truth. Sure they were beholden to these sacred writings they had then among them, for so common a belief; and since it is out of question, from our Saviour's express words, they do contain the ground of that belief; what cause have we to be so shy of so interpreting scriptures that have a fair aspect that way? It is, that we can devise to fasten here and there another sense upon divers such? I wonder what one text can be mentioned in all the Old Testament to this purpose, wherein one may not do so. And what then would be the tendency of this course, but to deny in all the particulars, what, upon so clear evidence, we are in the general forced to admit? and to put Moses, and Abraham, and David, in a lower class than Pythagoras, and Socrates, and Plato? And I think it would not be easy to find one text in all that part of the Bible, where both the words thereof, and the context, do more fairly comply, than in this, so as not only to admit, but even to invite, that interpretation.

For the term *awake*, about which the present inquiry is, how apt and obvious is the analogy between our awaking out of natural sleep, and the holy soul's rising up out of the darkness and torpor of its present state, into the enlivening light of God's presence? It is truly said so to awake, at its first quitting these darksome regions, when it lays aside its cumbersome night-vail. It doth so more perfectly, in the joyful morning of the resurrection-day, when mortality is swallowed up in life, and all the yet hovering shadows of it are vanished and fled away. And how known and usual an application this is of the metaphorical terms of sleeping and awaking in holy writ, I need not tell them who have read the Bible. Nor doth this interpretation less fitly accord to the other contents of this verse: for to what state do the sight of God's face, and satisfaction with his likeness, so fully agree, as to that of future blessedness in the other world? But then the contexture of discourse in this and the foregoing verse together, seems plainly to determine us to this sense: for what can be more conspicuous in them, than a purposed comparison and opposition of two states of felicity mutually each to other? That of the wicked, whom he calls *men of time*, (as the words are rendered by[1] one, and do literally

[1] מתי מחלד. Homines de tempore. *Pagnin.*

signify,) and whose portion, he tells us, is in this life: and the righteous man's, his own; which he expected not to be till he should awake, *i. e.* not till after this life.

Thirdly. It is further to be inquired, how we are here to understand *the likeness of God?* I doubt not but we are to understand by it, his glory. And the only difficulty which it will be necessary at present to consider about it, is, whether we are to take it objectively, or subjectively; for the glory to be represented to the blessed soul, or the glory to be impressed upon it; the glory which it is to behold, or the glory it shall bear. And I conceive the difference is more easily capable of accommodation, than of a strict decision on either part. By *face* is undoubtedly meant objective glory, and that in its most perfect representation; the face being, as we know with men, the chief seat of aspectable majesty and beauty. Hence when Moses desires to see God's glory, though he did vouchsafe some discovery of it, yet he tells him his face cannot be seen. Hereupon, therefore, the next expression, *thy likeness*, might the more plausibly be restrained to subjective glory, so as to denote the image of God now in its most perfect impression, on the blessed soul. But that I insist not on. Supposing, therefore, that what is signified by *face*, be repeated over again in this word *likeness*, yet I conceive the expression is not varied in vain; but having more to say than only that he expected a state of future *vision*, *viz.* that he assured himself of *satisfaction* too, another word was thought fit to be used, that might signify also somewhat that must intervene in order to that satisfaction. 'Tis certain the mere objective representation and consequent intuition of the most excellent (even the Divine) glory, cannot satisfy a soul remaining disaffected and unsuitable thereunto. It can only satisfy, as being represented; it forms the soul into the same image, and attempers it to itself, *q. d.* "I expect hereafter to see the blessed face of God, and to be myself blessed or satisfied by his glory, at once appearing to me, and transfusing itself upon me." In short, therefore, I understand by that term, the glory of God as transforming, or as impressive of itself. If therefore glory, the object of the soul's vision, shall by any be thought to be intended in it, I contend not; supposing only, that the object be taken not materially, or potentially only, for the thing visibly in itself considered: but formally, and in *esse actuali objecti*, that is, as now, *actually impressing itself*, or as connoting such an impression upon the behold-

ing soul; for so only is it productive of such a pleasure and satisfaction to it, as must ensue. As in this form of speech, "such a man takes pleasure in knowledge," it is evident knowledge must be taken there both objectively, for the things known, and subjectively, for the actual perception of those things; inasmuch as, apparently, both must concur to work him delight. So it will appear, to any one that attentively considers it, glory must be taken in that passage,[m] "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God." 'Tis divine glory both revealed and received; his exhibition and communication of it, according to his *immensity*; and our participation of it, according to our *measure*, that must concur to our eternal satisfaction. Herein the Platonic adage[n] hath evident truth in it; *Pleasure is here certainly made up of something finite and something infinite, meeting together.* 'Tis not (as the philosopher speaks) a χωριστον, but a κτητόν τι; not any thing *separate* from the soul, but something it *possesses*, that can make it happy. 'Tis not happy by an incommunicate happiness, nor glorious by an incommunicate glory. Indeed, the discovery of such a glory to an inglorious, unholy soul, must rather torment than satisfy. The future glory of saints is therefore called [o] *a glory to be revealed in them* (or *into them*, as the word signifies.) And in the foregoing words, the apostle assures Christ's fellow-sufferers, that they shall be glorified together with him. Surely the notation of that word, the formal notion of glorification, cannot import so little as only to be a spectator of glory; it must signify a being made glorious.

Nor is the common and true maxim otherwise intelligible, that grace and glory differ only in degree. For certainly it could never enter into the mind of a sober man (though how dangerously some speak, that might possibly have been so if too much learning had not made them mad, will be animadverted in its place,) that objective glory, and grace in saints, were the same specific (much less the same numerical) thing. 'Tis true, that Scripture often expresses the future blessedness, by vision of God. But where that phrase is used to signify it alone, 'tis evident, (as within the lower regions of grace, words of knowledge do often imply affection, and correspondent impressions on the soul) it must be understood of affective transformative vision

m Rom. v. 2.
n Voluptatis generatio est ex infiniti et finiti copulatione
o Rom. viii. 18. εις ημας.

such as hath conformity to God most inseparably conjunct with it. And, that we might understand so much, they are elsewhere both expressly mentioned together, as joint ingredients into a saint's blessedness; as in those words so full of clear and rich sense: "When he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Which text I take for a plain comment upon this; and methinks it should not easily be supposable, they should both speak so near the same words, and not intend the same sense.—You have in both, the same *season*, "When he shall appear, When I shall awake:" the same *subject*, The *righteous* person *born* of God; (compare the close of the former chapter with the beginning of this;) and, "I in righteousness;" the same vision, "We shall see him as he is, I shall behold his face:" the same *assimilation*, "We shall be like him; I shall be satisfied with his likeness" (concerning the χτσις or habitude this vision and assimilation mutually have to one another, there will be consideration had in its place.) I therefore conceive neither of these notions of the Divine likeness to exclude the other. If it be inquired, which is principally meant? That needs not be determined. If the latter, it supposes the former; if the former, it infers the latter. Without the first, the other cannot be; without the other, the first cannot satisfy.

If any yet disagree to this interpretation of this text, let them affix the doctrine propounded from it, to that other last mentioned, (which only hath not the express mention of a consequent satisfaction, as this hath; whence, therefore, as being in this respect fuller, my thoughts were pitched upon this.) Only withal let it be considered how much more easy it is to imagine another sense, and suppose it possible, than to disprove this, or evince it impossible.—How far probable it is, must be left to the judgment of the indifferent: with whom it may not be insignificant to add, that thus it hath been understood by interpreters (I might adventure to say the generality) of all sorts. However, the few annexed[p] (for I neither apprehend the necessity, nor

p Agitur de resurrectione et manifestatione gloriæ cœlestis. Ruffin in loc.—Cum apparuerit gloria tua, *i. e.* gloria resurrectionis. Bed. Comment. in Psalm.

How the Jews were wont to understand it, may be seen at one view in that of Petrus Galatinus in loc. Duo mi Capnio me hic per priscas Judæorum Scripturas ostendere hortaris, et generalem mortuorum resurrectionem futuram esse et eam per Messiam factum iri, primum itaque patet non solum per sacras scripturæ testimonia verum etiam per Talmudistarum dicta. Nam illud quidem, Psal. xvii. dictum ego in justitia—&c. sic exponunt, et presertim Rabbi Abraham Aven Ezra et Rabbi Solomo, &c. And so he goes on to recite their words, De Arcanis Catholicæ veritatis.

have the present conveniency, of alleging many) will suffice to avoid any imputation of singularity or novelty.

CHAPTER II.

A summary proposal of the doctrine contained in this scripture. A distribution of it into three distinct heads of discourse: *viz:* 1. The qualified subject. 2. The nature. 3. The season of the blessedness here spoken of. The first of these taken into consideration where the qualification, *righteousness*, is treated of. About which is shown 1. What it is. 2. How it qualifies.

Now the foregoing sense of the words being supposed, it appears that the proper argument of the scripture is,—The blessedness of the righteous in the other life, consisting in the vision and participation of the Divine glory, with the satisfaction that resulteth thence. In which summary account of the doctrine here contained, three general heads of discourse offer themselves to our view:—The subject, the nature, and the season of this blessedness:—Or to whom it belongs, wherein it consists, and when it shall be enjoyed.

First, then, we begin with the consideration of the subject unto whom this blessedness appertains. And we find it expressed in the text, in these only words, "I; in righteousness;" which amounts to as much as, a righteous person as such. They represent to us the subject of this blessedness in its proper qualifications; wherein our business

Opponis hæc, iis quæ de impiis dixerat. Illi Sapiunt terrena Saturantur filiis et portionem suam in hac vita ponunt, mihi vero contempta est hæc vita; ad futuram festino, ubi non in divitiis, sed in justitia videbo, non terrenam hæc transitura, sed ipsam faciem tuam, nec saturabor in filiis carnis sed cum evigilavero tua similitudine, sicut. 1 Joh. iii. 2.—Cum apparuerit, &c. Luth. in Psal.

Resurgam e mortuis—videbo de perfectissimo sicut es, Similis ero tibi. Jun. and Tremel on Psalm 17.

Mollerus thinks it ought not to be restrained to life eternal, but saith, some understand of the glory, quâ ornabuntur pii in vitâ æternâ. And adds,—et quidem non male In.—Ego vero et omnes electi tui—pie et juste vivimus in hoc sæculo, ut aliquando in futuro sæculo videamus faciem tuam, et ea satiemur cum sc. a pulvere terræ evigilaverimus et reformati fuerimus ad similitudinem Christi tui. Seb Munster. in notis in loc.

Cum ego ad imaginem tuam conditus resurroxero. Vatablus: though he adds, alii ad resurrectionem non referunt.

De futuræ vitæ felicitate gir, satiabor quum expergiscar, *i. e.* quum resurgam e mortuis—Similitudine tuâ, hoc est videbo de perfectissime. sicuti es; et Similis ero tibi quum patefactus Christus glorioso adventu suo. 1 John iii. 2. Fabrit. Conc. in Psal. 17. ult.

Describit his verbis Psalmographus beatitudenem æternam filiorum Dei. Gvsnerus in loc.

is to consider his qualification, *righteousness*, under which notion only he is concerned in the present discourse; and about which, two things are to be inquired—What it imports, and—How it qualifies.

First, What it imports. I take righteousness here to be opposed to wickedness in the foregoing verse; (as was intimated before;) and so understand it in equal latitude, not of particular, but of universal righteousness. That is, not that particular virtue which inclines men to give every one their right, (unless in that every one, you would include also the blessed God himself, the sovereign common Lord of all,) but a universal rectitude of heart and life, comprehending not only equity towards men, but piety towards God also. A conformity to the law in general, in its utmost[a] extent, adequately opposite to sin, (which is indeed of larger extent than wickedness; and in what different respects righteousness is commensurate to the one and the other, we shall see by and by,) as that is, generally, said to be ανομια, [b]*a transgression of the law*. Among [c]moralists, such a comprehensive notion of righteousness as is inclusive of all other virtues, is not unknown. But in Scripture, it is its much more ordinary acceptation. To give instances, were to suppose too much ignorance in the reader; and to enumerate the passages in which this term is taken in that extensive sense, were too great an unnecessary burden to the writer. It were indeed to transcribe a great part of the Bible. How familiar is the opposition of *righteous* and *wicked*, and *righteous* and *sinner*, in sacred language! And how fully co-extent *righteousness* is, in the scripture notion of it, to the whole law of God, that one passage sufficiently discovers; where 'tis said of Zacharias and Elisabeth, [d] that they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. 'Tis true, indeed, that when the words godliness or holiness are in conjunction with this term, its significancy is divided and shared with them; so as that they signify in that case, conformity to the will of God in the duties of the *first* table, and this is confined to those of the *second*: otherwise, being put alone, it signifies the whole duty of man, as the other expressions also do in the same case, especially the latter of them.

As it seems not to be within the present design of the context to take notice of any imputed wickedness of the

a 1 John i. 9. b 1 John iii. 4.
c Εν δε δικαιοσυνη συλληβδην πασ' αρετ' εστι.
d Luke i. 5, 6.

opposite sort of persons, other than what was really in them; and whereby they might be fitly characterized; so I conceive, that imputed righteousness is not here meant, that is inherent in the person of the Mediator; but that which is truly subjected in a child of God, and descriptive of him. Nor must any think it strange, that all the requisites to our salvation are not found together in one text of Scripture. The righteousness of him, whom we are to adore as made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, hath a much higher sphere, peculiar and appropriate in itself. This of which we now speak, in its own inferior and subordinate place, is necessary also to be both had and understood. It must be understood by viewing it in its rule, in conformity whereto it stands; which must needs be some law of God. There hath been a twofold law given by God to mankind, as the measure of a universal righteousness, the one made for innocent, the other for lapsed man; which are distinguished by the apostle under the names of the [e]law of works, and the law of faith. It can never be possible, that any of the apostate sons of Adam should be denominated righteous by the former of these laws, the righteousness thereof consisting in a perfect and sinless obedience. The latter therefore is the only measure and rule of this righteousness, *viz.* the law of faith; not that part of the gospel-revelation which contains and discovers our duty, what we are to be and do in order to our blessedness; being, as to the matter of it, the whole moral law, before appertaining to the covenant of works, attempered to the state of fallen sinners, by evangelical mitigations and indulgence, by the superadded precepts of repentance and faith in a Mediator, with all the other duty respecting the Mediator, as such; and clothed with a new form as it is now taken into the constitution of the covenant of grace. This rule, though it be in the whole of it capable of coming under one common notion, as being the standing, obliging law of Christ's mediatory kingdom; yet according to the different matter of it, its obligations and annexed sanctions are different. As to its matter, it must be understood to require:

1. The mere being and sincerity of those gracious principles, with their essential acts (as there is opportunity) expressed therein, in opposition to the nullity and insincerity of them.

2. All the possible degrees and improvements of such

[e] Rom. iii. 27.

principles and acts, in opposition to any the least failure or defect. In the former respect, it measures the very essence of this righteousness, and enjoins what concerns the being of the righteous man as such. In the latter, it measures all the super-added degrees of this righteousness, (which relations, where they have a mutable foundation, admit,) enjoining what concerns the perfection of the righteous man. In the former respect, righteousness is opposed to wickedness, as in that of the Psalmist, [f]I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God—therefore hath the Lord recompensed me according to my righteousness. In the latter to sin, with which the apostle makes unrighteousness co-extent, in these words, If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, &c. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Accordingly are its sanctions divers. For wherein it enjoins the former of these, the essence of this righteousness, in opposition to a total absence thereof, it is constitutive of the terms of salvation, and obligeth under the penalty of eternal death. So are faith, repentance, love, subjection, &c. required: [g]If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. He that believeth not is condemned already.—The wrath of God abideth on him.—[h]If ye repent not, ye shall all likewise perish. [i]Repent, that your sins may be blotted out.—Him hath God exalted to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins. [k]If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maran-atha. [l]He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me, &c. [m]If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, (that is, as the former scripture expounds this, loves them not less than me,) he cannot be my disciple; *i. e.* while he remains in that temper of mind he now is of, he must needs be wholly unrelated unto me, and incapable of benefit by me, as well as he is indocible, and not susceptible of my further instructions, neither capable of the precepts or privileges belonging to discipleship. [n]He is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him; and will come in flaming fire to take vengeance of those

[f] Ps. xviii. 21, 24.
[g] John viii. 24. chap. iii. 18, 36.
[h] Luke xiii. 3, 5.
[i] Acts iii. 19. chap. v. 31.
[k] 1 Cor. xvi. 22.
[l] Matt. x. 37.
[m] Luke xiv. 26.
[n] Heb. v. 9. 2 Thes. 1, 8, 9, &c.

that know not God, and obey not his gospel; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, &c. Where it is only the sincerity of those several requisites, that is under so severe penalty exacted and called for; inasmuch as he that is sincerely a believer, a penitent, a lover of God or Christ, an obedient subject, is not capable of the contrary denomination, and therefore not liable, according to the tenor of this law, to be punished as an infidel, an impenitent person, an enemy, a rebel.

When it enjoins the latter, *viz.* all the subsequent duty, through the whole course whereof the already sincere soul must be tending towards perfection; though it bind not thereto under pain of damnation, further than as such neglects and miscarriages may be so gross and continued, as not to consist with sincerity, yet such injunctions are not wholly without penalty; but here it obliges, under less penalties, the hiding of God's face, and other paternal severities and castigations. They that thus only offend, [o]are chastened of the Lord, that they may not be condemned with the world. Their iniquity is visited with the rod, and their transgression with stripes, though loving-kindness be not taken away.—Yea, and while they are short of perfect holiness, their blessedness is imperfect also; which is to be acknowledged a very grievous penalty, but unconceivably short of what befalls them that are simply unrighteous. That it obliges thus diversely, is evident; for it doth not adjudge unto eternal death without remedy, for the least defect; for then what other law should relieve against the sentence of this? or wherein were this a relieving law? Yet doth it require perfection, that we [p]perfect holiness in the fear of God; that we be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. And otherwise, did it bind to no other duty than what it makes simply necessary to salvation; the defects and miscarriages that consist with sincerity were no sins, not being provided against by any law that is of present obligation (unless we will have the law of nature to stand by itself as a distinct law, both from that of works, and of grace; which is not necessary; but as it did at first belong to the former, so it doth now to the latter, as shall further be shown by and by.) For to suppose the law of works in its own proper form and tenor, to be still obliging, is to suppose all under hopeless condemnation, inasmuch as all have sinned. And besides, it should oblige

o 1 Cor. xi. Psal. lxxxix. p 2 Cor. vii. 1. Matt. v.

to cast off all regard to Christ, and to seek blessedness without him; yea, and it should oblige to a natural impossibility, to a contradiction, to make that not to have been, which hath been; a sinner to seek happiness by never having sinned. It cannot therefore entirely, in its own form, as it was at first made and laid upon man, be of present and continuing obligation to him. But in what part and respect it is, or is not, comes now more distinctly to be shown. Here know, the law of nature, with fit additionals, became one formed constitution; which being violated by the apostacy, became unuseful to the end it was made for, the containing of man within the bounds of such duty as should be conjunct with his blessedness. Therefore was the new constitution of the law of grace made and settled, which alters, adds to, takes from it, relaxes, or re-enforces it, according as the matter of it, the exigency of man's case, and God's gracious purpose and design, could admit, and did require. For the *promise*, (implied in the threatening) it ceased; sin having disobliged the promiser. For the *precept*, the expressed positive part is plainly abrogated.[q] For the natural part, as it was not necessary, so nor was it possible it should be so; its foundations being more stable than heaven and earth. For the *commination*, we must understand two things in it: first, that for every transgression, a proportionable punishment must become due: secondly, that this debt be in event exacted; or, that God do actually inflict the deserved penalty entirely and fully upon the offending person.

The former of these is in the strictest and most proper sense natural, and therefore also unalterable. This dueness arising immediately from the relation of a reasonable creature offending, to his Maker. Whence also it is discernible to mere natural light. Pagans are said (Rom. i. 32.) to have known the righteous judgment of God, that they who commit such things (as are there mentioned) are worthy of death. And hence was the mention and dread of a Nemesis, and an εκδικον ομμα, *a vindictive Deity, and a revengeful eye*, over them, so frequent with them. "If therefore (as the learned Grotius speaks[r]) there had never been a penal law; yet a human act, having in itself a pravity, whether intrinsical, from the immutable nature of the thing; or even extrinsical, from the contrary command of God, had deserved punishment, and that very grievous." Now what an arbitrary constitution did not create, it could not

q 1 Tim. iv. 4. r De Satisf. cap. 3.

nullify; but might add strength, and give a confirmation to it. But now for the latter, that this debt be entirely and fully exacted of the sinner himself; though that be also natural, yet not in the strictest and most proper sense, *i. e.* it is convenient and agreeable to the nature of the thing; not what it doth so necessarily require, that it can upon no terms be dispensed with. It is so natural, as that the son inherit from his father, which yet may, sometimes, for just causes be ordered otherwise. It is what, if it were done, justice could not but approve; not what it doth strictly and indispensably require; or, is a debt which it might exact, but which may, without injustice, upon valuable considerations be remitted. The former of these, therefore, the new constitution doth no way infringe or weaken, but confirm and reinforce. The latter it so far dispenses with, as that, for the satisfaction made by the Redeemer, the debt incurred by sin, be remitted to the sinner that truly repents and believes, and continues sincerely (though imperfectly) to obey for the future. So that his after-delinquencies, consisting with such sincerity, do not actually, or in event, subject him to other penalties, than the paternal rebukes and chastenings before mentioned. But this latter part considerable in the commination, the determination of the full penalty to the very person of the transgressor: it doth not dispense with to others (*i. e.* of the adult, and of persons in a present natural possibility of understanding the Lawgiver's pleasure herein) than such before described; but says expressly,[t] He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. That indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, shall be upon every soul of man that doth evil.

Therefore the morally preceptive part of the law of works is not in force as man's rule of duty, considered in conjunction with the promise: that is, it doth not now say to any man, Do this, *i. e.* perfectly obey without ever having sinned, that thou *may'st live*. Both which he was obliged to eye conjunctly; the former as containing the *rule;* the other the *end*, in part, of his obedience. But it is in force even by the new constitution itself, as God's rule of judgment, considered in conjunction with the commination, upon all whom the law of grace relieves not, as not coming up to the terms of it; whom also this supervening law brings under a supervening aggravated condemnation.

[s] Grot. Ibid. [t] John iii. 36. Rom. ii. 8, 9.

For where the obligation to obedience is violated, the obligation to punishment naturally takes place. We see then how far the law of works is in force, and how far not. But that so far as it is in force, it is to be looked on as taken into the new constitution of the law of grace, is evident. For it is new modified, and hath received a new mould and stamp by this law: which is now become (so far as it is promulgate) the standing rule of government over the lapsed world. The principal modifying act herein, is *dispensation*. Now this, 'tis true, may be so understood, or may be taken in such a sense, as wherein it will only belong to the executive part of government: that is, when it is not the act of the same power that made the law; as where only the execution of a deserved penalty is dispensed with, which may be done, in some cases, by a judge that is only a minister of the law, and not the maker of it; being (as may be supposed) enabled thereto by that law itself, or by an authority annexed to his office; or by virtue of instructions, which leave to him some latitude of managing the affairs of his judicature in a discretionary way, as present occasions shall dictate. And yet by none of these would any change be made in the law: but this is dispensation in a less proper sense. In the proper and more famous sense, dispensation belongs to the legislative part of government, being the act of the same power that made the former law, now dispensed with; and an act of the same kind, *viz.* legislation; the making of a new law that alters the former which it hath relation to: whence it was wont to be reckoned among those things that make a change in a law.[u] And so the case is here. The former law is dispensed with by the making of a new one; which so alters and changes it in its matter and frame, and more immediate end, as hath been shown: and a changed law is not the same.

Nor is it at all strange, that the minatory part of the law of works related to the preceptive, so as with it to constitute the debt of punishment, should be now within the compass of the Redeemer's law. For by this applied and urged on the consciences of sinners, he performs a necessary preparatory part of his work for their recovery, *viz.* the awakening, the humbling them; and reducing them to a just and useful despair of relief and help, otherwise than by his merciful hand and vouchsafement; and the rendering them hereby capable of his following applications. Cutting

u Vid. Suarez de Legibus.

or lancing, with other such severities, are as proper and useful a part of the chirurgeon's business, as the applying of healing medicines: nor have they the same design and end for which wounds are inflicted by an enemy, the taking away of life, but the saving of it. And the matter is out of doubt, that the most rigorous determination of the penalty that shall be understood duly belonging to the least sin, hath a place, and doth stand visibly extant to view in the publicly avowed declaration, and among the placita or decretals of the Redeemer. We there read, that whosoever shall say to his brother,[v] fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire: (yea, and that lower degrees of the same kind of sin, do expose to lower degrees of the same kind of punishment, as our Saviour's words must be understood, if we attend the plain meaning of his allusive and borrowed phrase of speech:) [w]That the wages of sin is death. That as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. And we are told,[x] that the Scripture (which is the word of Christ, and was written not for innocent but lapsed man) hath concluded all under sin. Where also we find what is the true intent and end of this rough and sharp dealing with men, the shutting them up, like sentenced malefactors, as in order to execution, (which seems to be the import of the word [y]here used,) *viz.* that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe (or to them believing, as the words may be read.) And moreover the Spirit, which breathes not in the law of works, as such, but in the law of grace, performs that operation which belongs to it, as it hath the name of the spirit of bondage, by applying and binding on the sentence of death, as due to the guilty person.

Therefore we must understand the Redeemer's constitution to have two parts. 1. An assertion and establishment of the ancient determined penalty due for every transgression; and to be certainly inflicted on all such as accept not the following offer of mercy upon the terms prescribed. Whereby the honour and justice of the Creator is salved and vindicated, in reference to that first covenant made with man. And the case of the sinner is plainly stated before him, that he may have a distinct and right apprehension of it. 2. The grant of pardon and

v Matt. v. 22.
x Verse 22.
w Rom. vi. 23. Gal. iii. 10.
y *συνεκλεισεν.* Ibid.

eternal life to those that repent unfeignedly of their sins, and turn to God; believing in the Mediator, and resigning themselves to his grace and government, to be by him conducted, and made acceptable to God in their return, and that continue sincere herein to the end. Whereby the wonderful mercy of God in Christ is demonstrated, and the remedy is provided and ascertained to the, otherwise, lost and hopeless sinner. And these two parts therefore are to be looked on in this constitution, though distinctly, yet not separately. The sinner is, at once, to consider the same penalty as naturally, and by divine sanction, due to him; but now graciously to be remitted: the same blessedness as justly lost, but mercifully to be restored, with a high improvement. And to own both these jointly, as the voice of the Redeemer in his gospel. Death is due to thee; blessedness forfeited by thy having sinned; but if thou sincerely repent, believe, and obey for the future, thou art pardoned, and entitled to everlasting life.

It therefore now appears, that as the law or dictates of pure nature, comprehended together with other fit additionals, became at first one entire constitution aptly suited to the government of man in his innocent state, unto which the title did well agree of the law or covenant of works; so the same natural dictates, transcribed and made express, (because now sullied, and not so legible in the corrupted nature of man,) do, with such allays and additions as the case required, compose and make up the constitution which bears the title of the law or covenant of grace, or the law of faith, or the gospel of Christ, and is only suitable to the state of man lapsed and fallen; as the measure of that righteousness which he is now to aim at, and aspire unto. The rule of this righteousness therefore being evidently the law of faith, the gospel revelation, wherein it is perceptive of duty; this righteousness can be understood to be nothing but the impress of the gospel upon a man's heart and life: a conformity in spirit and practice to the revelation of the will of God in Jesus Christ; a collection of graces exerting themselves in suitable actions and deportments towards God and man; Christ formed in the soul, or put on; the new creature in its being and operations; the truth learned as it is in Jesus, to the putting off the old man, and the putting on the new. More distinctly, we may yet see wherein it lies, upon a premised view of some few things necessary to be fore-known in order thereunto. As, That this righteousness is a renewing righteousness,

or the righteousness of one formerly a sinner, a lapsed perishing wretch, who is by it restored into such a state towards God, as he was in before that lapse (in respect of certain great essentials, though as yet his state be not so perfectly good, while he is in his tendency and motion; and shall, by certain additionals, be unspeakably better, when he hath attained the end and rest he is tending to.)

That a reasonable creature, yet untainted with sin, could not but have a temper of mind suitable to such apprehensions as these, *viz.* That as it was not the author of being to itself, so it ought not principally to study the pleasing and serving of itself, but him who gave it being; that it can no more continue and perfect itself unto blessedness, than it could create itself; and can therefore have no expectation hereof, but from the same author of its being; and hence, that it must respect and eye the great God, its Creator and Maker, as—the sovereign authority whom it was to fear and obey, and—the sovereign good whom it was to love and enjoy, But because it can perform no duty to him, without knowing what he will have it to do; nor have any particular expectation of favours from him, without knowing what he will please to bestow; and is therefore obliged to attend to the revelations of his will concerning both these; it is therefore necessary, that he eye him under a notion introductive and subservient to all the opperations that are to be exerted towards him, under the two former notions; *i. e.* as the *eternal never-failing truth*, safely to be depended on, as intending nothing of deceit in any the revelations, whether of his righteous will, concerning matter of duty to be done; or of his good will, concerning matter of benefit to be expected and enjoyed: That man did apostatize and revolt from God, as considered under these several notions; and returns to him, when a holy rectitude is recovered, and he again becomes righteous, considered under the same: That it was not agreeable to God's wisdom, truth, and legal justice, to treat with man a sinner in order to his recovery, but through a mediator; and that therefore he was pleased in wonderful mercy to constitute and appoint his own Son Jesus Christ, God-man, unto that office and undertaking; that through him, man might return and be reconciled to himself, whom he causelessly forsook; designing that he shall now become so affected towards himself, through the Mediator; and firstly therefore towards the Mediator's own

person, as he was before, and ought to have been towards himself immediately.

Therefore, whereas God was considerable in relation to man, both in his innocency and apostacy, under that forementioned twofold notion of the supreme authority and goodness; he hath also set up and exalted our Lord Jesus Christ, and represented him to sinners under an answerable twofold notion of a Prince and a Saviour; *i. e.* a mediating Prince and Saviour; to give repentance first, to bow and stoop the hearts of sinners, and reduce them to a subject posture again; and then by remission of sins to restore them to favour, and save them from the wrath to come. Him hath the father clothed with his own authority, and filled with his grace; requiring sinners to submit themselves to his ruling power, and commit themselves to his saving mercy; now both lodged in this his Son: to pay him *immediately* all homage and obedience, and through him *ultimately* to himself; from him *immediately* to expect salvation and blessedness, and through him *ultimately*, from himself. That whereas the spirits of men are not to be wrought to this temper, but by the intervention of a discovery and revelation of the Divine will to this purpose; our Lord Jesus Christ is further appointed by the Father to reveal all this his counsel to sinners, and is eminently spoken of in Scripture upon this account, under the notion of the *truth*; in which capacity he more effectually recommends to sinners both his *authority* and his grace. So that his threefold (so much celebrated) office of King, Priest, and Prophet, (the distinct parts of his general office as mediator,) which he manages in order to the reducement of lost sinners, exactly correspond (if you consider the more eminent acts and properties of each office) to that threefold notion under which the spirit of man must always have eyed and been acted towards God, had he never fallen: and hence this righteousness, which consists in conformity to the gospel, is the former righteousness, which was lost; with such an accession as is necessary, upon consideration that it was lost, and was only to be recovered by a mediator.

Therefore you may now take this short and as compendious an account as I can give of it, in what follows. It includes so firm and understanding an assent to the truth of the whole gospel revelation, as that the soul is thereby brought, through the power of the Holy Ghost, sensibly to apprehend its former disobedience to God, and distance

from him, the reasonableness of subjection to him, and desirableness of blessedness in him; the necessity of a Redeemer to reconcile and recover it to God; the accomplishments and designation of the Lord Jesus Christ to that purpose: and hence, a penitent and complacential return to God, as the supreme authority and sovereign good, an humble and joyful acceptance of our Lord Jesus Christ, as its Prince and Saviour, with submission to his authority, and reliance on his grace; (the exercise of both which are founded in his blood;) looking and pitching upon him, as the only medium, through which he and his duties can please God, or God and his mercies approach him; and through which he hath the confidence to venture upon a covenant acceptance of God, and surrender of himself to him, afterward pursued to his uttermost, by a continued course of living in his fear and love, in obedience to him, and communion with him through the Mediator; always, while he is passing the time of his pilgrimage in this world, groaning under remaining sin, and pressing after perfect holiness; with an earnest expectation (animating him to a persevering patience through all difficulties) of a blessed eternity in the other world. That such a conformity to the gospel should be expressed by the name of righteousness, cannot seem strange to such as acquaint themselves with the language of the Scripture. That gracious frame which the gospel (made effectual) impresses upon the soul, is the kingdom of God, in the passive notion of it, his kingdom received, and now actually come with power upon our spirits. And this kingdom (sometimes also by an apt synecdoche called judgment in the same notion) is said to consist in righteousness; whence then result also,[z] peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. The same holy impressions and consequent operations are mentioned by the apostle under the name of[a] fruits of righteousness, wherewith he prays his Philippians might be filled. It was Elymas's opposition to the gospel, that stigmatized him with that brand, "Thou enemy of all righteousness." To yield ourselves servants to righteousness, in opposition to a former servitude to sin, is[b] obeying from the heart the doctrine of the gospel, into the type or mould whereof we have been cast or delivered. And sure, both the seal and the impression, God's revelation and holiness, (however now more explicit and distinctly conspicuous in all their parts,) are the same,

z Rom. xiv. 17. a Phil. i. 11. b Rom. vi. 17.

with us substantially, and in David's time; whence we need make no difficulty to own this latter, when we meet with it, as here, under the same name. By what hath hitherto been said, it may be already seen in part, how exactly this righteousness corresponds to the blessedness for which it qualifies; whereof we shall have occasion hereafter to take further notice. In the meantime, it will be requisite to show, which was promised to be done in the next place.

How it qualifies. To which I say (very briefly) that it qualifies for this blessedness two ways:

1. Legally, or in *genere Morali*, as it describes the persons, who by the gospel-grant have, alone, title thereunto. —[c] The righteous into life eternal.—The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Say to the righteous it shall be well with them. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him.—In his righteousness he shall live. In which last words, how this righteousness conduceth to life, is expressed by the same preposition as in the text. In this kind it is not at all casual of this blessedness, but 'tis that which the free, and wise, and holy Law-giver thought meet, by his settled constitution, (besides what necessity there is of it, upon another account,) to make requisite thereto. The conformity of our Lord Jesus Christ to that severer law, under which he is said to have been made, is that which alone causes, merits, purchases, this blessedness; which yet is to be enjoyed, not by all *indiscriminatim*, or without distinction, but by such alone, as come up to the terms of the gospel; as he did fully satisfy the strict exactions of that other rigid law, by doing and suffering for their sakes.

2. Naturally, or in *genere Physico*. In this kind it may be said to be some way casual, that is, to be a *causa materialis dispositiva*, by a proper positive influence, *disposing the subject* unto this blessedness; which that it shall, yet, enjoy, is wholly to be resolved into the Divine good pleasure; but it is put by this holy rectitude in that temper and posture that it may enjoy it, through the Lord's gracious vouchsafement; when without it, 'twere naturally impossible that any should. An unrighteous impure soul, is in a natural indisposition to see God, or be blessed in him. That depraved temper averts it from him; the steady bent of its will is set another way, and 'tis a contradiction that

c Matt. xxv. 1 Cor. vi. Isa. iii. Ezek. xviii.

any (*in sensu composito*) should be happy against their wills, *i. e.* while that aversion of will yet remains. The unrighteous banish themselves from God, they shun and hate his presence. Light and darkness cannot have communion. The sun doth but shine, continue to be itself, and the darkness vanishes, and is fled away. When God hath so determined, that only the pure in heart shall see him; that without holiness none shall; he lays no other law upon unholy souls, than what their own impure nature lay upon themselves. If therefore it should be inquired, Why may not the unrighteous be subjects of this blessedness, see God, and be satisfied with his likeness, as well as the righteous? the question must be so answered, as if it were inquired, Why doth the wood admit the fire to pass upon it, suffer its flames to insinuate themselves till they have introduced its proper form, and turned it into their own likeness; but we see water doth not so, but violently resists its first approaches, and declines all commerce with it? The natures of these agree not. And is not the contrariety here as great? We have then the qualified subject of this blessedness, and are next to consider this blessedness itself.

CHAPTER III.

The nature of this blessedness, propounded unto consideration, in the three ingredients (here mentioned) whereof it consists. 1. Vision of God's face. 2. Assimilation to him. 3. The satisfaction resulting thence. These propounded to be considered, 1. Absolutely and singly each by itself. 2. Relatively, in their mutual respects to each other. The first of these, Vision of God's face, discoursed of. 1. The object. 2. The act.

Now for the nature of this blessedness, or the inquiry wherein it lies, so far as the text gives us any account of it, we are invited to turn our thoughts and discourse to it. And we have it here represented to us in all the particulars that can be supposed to have any nearer interest in the business of blessedness, or to be more intimate and intrinsical thereunto. For (the beatific object supposed) what more can be necessary to actual, complete, formal blessedness, than the sight of it, an adaptation or assimilation to it, (which is nothing else but its being actually communicated and imparted to the soul, its being united and made

as it were one with it,) and the complacential fruition the soul hath of it so communicated, or having so transformed it into itself.

And these three are manifestly contained in the text: (the beatific object being involved with them:) the first in the former cause, "I shall behold thy face;" the second and third in the latter, "I shall be satisfied with thy likeness;" where, being made like to God hath been discovered to be supposed; and the satisfaction, the pleasant contentful relishes consequent thereto, plainly expressed. We shall therefore have stated the entire nature of this blessedness in the handling of these three things;—vision of the face of God,—participation of his likeness, and—satisfaction therein.

And I shall choose to consider them, 1. Absolutely, and singly, each by itself. 2. Relatively, in the mutual respects (by way of influence and dependence) they may be found to have towards each other.

Therefore first, in the absolute consideration of them severally, we begin with,

First, the vision of God's face, where—the object, the face of God, and—the act of seeing and beholding it, are distinctly to be spoken to.

1. The face of God, the object of this vision, which is his glory represented, offered to view. And this object or exhibited glory is twofold:—1. Sensible, such as shall incur and gratify (after the resurrection) the bodily eye—2. Intellectual, or intelligible; that spiritual glory that only comes under the view and contemplation of the glorified mind.

1. A sensible glory (to begin with what is lower) is fitly in our way to be taken notice of, and may well be comprehended (as its less principal intendment) within the significancy of the expression; the face of God. So indeed it doth evidently signify, Exod. xxxiii. 11. And if we look to the notation of the word, and its frequent use as applied to God, it may commodiously enough, and will often, be found to signify, in a larger and more extended sense, any aspect or appearance of God. And though it may be understood, ver. 23. of that chapter, to signify an overcoming spiritual glory, as the principal thing there intended, such as no soul dwelling in flesh could behold, without rending the vail, and breaking all to pieces; yet, even there also, may such a degree of sensible glory be secondarily intended, as it was not consistent with a state

of mortality to be able to bear. And supposing the other expression, "Thy likeness," to signify, in any part, the *objective* glory saints are to behold; it is very capable of being extended so far, as to take in a *sensible* appearance of glory also, which it doth in these words,[d] "The similitude of the Lord shall he behold:" yet even that glory also was transformative and impressive of itself: Moses so long conversed with it, till he became incapable, for the present, of converse with men, as you know the story relates.

Such a glory as this, though it belong not to the being of God, yet it may be some umbrage of him, a more shadowy representation, as a man's garments are of the man, which is the allusion in that of the Psalmist,[e] Thou art clothed with majesty and honour: Thou coverest thyself with *light* as with a garment. And inasmuch as that spiritual body (the house not made with hands) wherewith the blessed are to be clothed upon, must then be understood to have its proper sensitive[g] powers and organs refined to that degree, as may be agreeable to a state of glory; so must these have their suitable objects to converse with. A faculty without an object, is not possible in nature, and is altogether inconsistent with a state of blessedness. The bodies of saints will be[h] raised in glory, fashioned like Christ's glorious body; must bear the image of the heavenly; and this will connaturalize them to a region of glory, render a surrounding sensible glory necessary and natural to them, their own element: they will, as it were, not be able to live but amidst such a glory. Place is conservative of the body placed in it, by its suitableness there. Indeed every created being (inasmuch as it is not self-sufficient, and is obliged to fetch in continual refreshings from without) must always have somewhat suitable to itself to converse with, or it presently languishes. By such a harmony of actives and passives, the world consists and holds together. The least defect thereof then, is least of all supposable in the state of blessedness. The rays of such a glory have often shone down into this lower world. Such a glory we know showed itself upon the Mount Sinai; afterwards often about the tabernacle, and in the temple; such a glory appeared at our Saviour's birth, baptism, and transfiguration; and will do at his expected appearance; which leaves it no unimagin-

d Numb. xii. 8. Ezek. i. 28. Exod. xxxiv. xxxv. &c.
e Psal. civ. 1, 2. f 2 Cor. v. 1. g Cuilibet potentiæ activæ respondet passiva, sive objectiva h 1 Cor. xv. 43. Phil. iii. 21.

able thing to us, and shows how facile it is to God to (do that which will then be, in some sort, necessary) create a glory meet for the entertainment and gratification of any such faculty, as he shall then continue in being. But,

2. The intellectual glory, that which perfected spirits shall eternally please themselves to behold, calls for our more especial consideration.[i] This is the glory that excelleth, hyperbolical glory, as that expression imports; such, as in comparison whereof, the other is said to be no glory: as the apostle speaks, comparing the glory of the legal with that of the evangelical dispensation; where the former was, we must remember, chiefly a sensible glory, the glory that shone upon Mount Sinai; the latter a purely spiritual glory; and surely, if the mere preludes of this glory, the *primordia*, the *beginnings* of it, the glory—yet shining but through a glass, (as he there also speaks of this glory,) were so hyperbolically glorious, what will it be in its highest exaltation, in its perfected state?[k] The apostle cannot speak of that, but with hyperbole upon hyperbole in the next chapter. As though he would heap up words as high as heaven to reach it, and give a just account of it. Things are as their next originals. This glory more immediately rays forth from God, and more nearly represents him. 'Tis his more genuine production. He is styled the[l] Father of glory: every thing that is glorious is some way like him, and bears his image. But he is as well the[m] Father of spirits, as the Father of glory; and that glory which is purely spiritual, hath most in it of his nature and image: as beams but in the next descent from the body of the sun. This is his unvailed face, and emphatically, the divine likeness. Again, things are as the faculties which they are to exercise and satisfy; this glory must exercise and satisfy the noblest faculty, of the most noble and excellent creature. Intellectual nature, in the highest improvement 'tis capable of in a creature, must here be gratified to the uttermost; the most enlarged contemplative power of an immortal spirit finds that wherein it terminates here, with a most contentful acquiescence. 'Tis true it must be understood not totally to exceed the capacity of a creature, but it must fully come up to it. Should it quite transcend the sphere of created nature, and surpass

i υπερβαλλουσης δοξης. 2 Cor. iii. 10.
k Καθ' υπερβολην εις υπερβολην. 2 Cor. iv. 17.
l Eph. i.
m Heb. xii.

the model of a human understanding, (as the Divine glory undoubtedly would, did not God consider us in the manner of exhibiting it to our view,) it would confound, not satisfy. A creature even in glory is still a creature, and must be treated as such. After the blessed God hath elevated it to the highest pitch, he must infinitely condescend; it cannot otherwise know or converse with him. He must accommodate his glory to the weaker eye, the fainter and more languid apprehensions, of a poor finite thing. I had almost said, nothing; for what is any creature, yea, the whole creation in its best state, compared with the *I AM*, the being (as he justly appropriates to himself that name) the All in All? We must be careful then to settle in our own thought such a state of this glory, (in forming that indeterminate notion we have now of it,) as may render it (though confessedly above the measure of our present understandings as to a distinct knowledge of it) not manifestly incompetent to any created understanding whatsoever, and as may speak us duly shy of ascribing a deity to a worm, of affixing any thing to the creature which shall be found agreeing to the blessed God himself alone. Their expressions therefore who over-magnify (even deify) the creature assumed into glory, must be heard and read with caution and abhorrency, as the high-swelling words of blasphemous vanity.[n] Is it not enough that perishing

n Not being willing to trouble a discourse wholly of another nature and design with any thing of controversy, I have chosen only to annex a marginal digression, wherein somewhat to animadvert upon the over-bold disputes and definitions of the scholastic generation, touching what we have now under consideration. Some of whose writings seem the very springs of the putid conceits (there not wanting those, that are officious enough to serve the illiterate, in accommodating things of that kind to their genius and language) so greedily imbibed by modern enthusiasts.

"Tis a question much agitated among the school-men, Whether the Divine essence be exhibited to the view of the blessed in heaven, in itself immediately, or by the intervention of any created likeness or similitude? Had it been agreed to forbear looking within this vail, (the rude attempt whereof, rather rends than draws it aside,and to shut up all discourse of this kind) in a modest awful silence; or had the adventures some have made been foolish only, not pernicious, this present labour had been spared. But when men speak of things above their reach, not to no purpose barely, but to very bad, what they say ought to be considered. The Divine essence, say the Thomists, (and the Scotists here disagree not,) is itself immediately united to the intellect of the blessed in *ratione Speciei intelligibilis*, so as there is no place for any intervening likeness, or representation. *Ipsa Divina essentia est, quæ videtur et quo videtur. Thom. Sum. prima parte, q.* 12. *Art.* 2. 3. *contr. Gentes, c.* 15. Now they assert concerning the *species intelligibiles*, in general, that they have not *Locum objecti, intellectionem terminantes*; (which they make the place and office of the *verbum mentis per intellectionem productum*;) but *formæ tantum et actus primi*; and that the understanding so acts by them, as fire by its proper form. *Thom. Sum. prima parte, q.* 85. *Art.* 2. (the contrary whereto is asserted by *Scotus in* 1. *Sentent. distinct.* 3. q. 6.) Yea, and *Cajet*, affirms 1. p. q. 76. *Art.* 2. That the intellect and the intelligible species

wretches, that were within one hand's breadth of hell, are saved, except they be also deified too? that they become happy, unless they also become gods? The distance even of a glorified creature from the glorious God, is still infinitely greater, than between it and the silliest worm, the minutest atom of dust.

are more one than the matter and form in the *compositum*. For, saith he, (or to that purpose, not having him now at hand,) the matter is not turned into the form, nor *e contra*, but the intellect, which is in itself mere power, doth, in *genere intelligibili*, turn into its very intelligible object; and the intelligible object itself is after a certain manner imbibed in the intellect. So *Ledesma de Divin. perfect. q.* 3. *Art.* 5. *unum transit in aliud, ex quo sequitur, quod unum sit aliud.* And hence, say they, applying this doctrine to the present purpose, *et secundum istum modum, in conjunctione illa ineffabili divinæ essentiæ cum intellectu creato, fit unum agens integrum*, scil. *intellectus creatus factus Deus mirabili modo. Intellectus in visione beatifica, est potentia jam deificata, per lumen gloriæ. Cajet. prima parte, q.* 12. *Art.* 2. *ex Ledes. q.* 3. *Art.* 5. For besides this immediate union of the Divine essence itself with the intellect, they assert a *lumen gloriæ*, an accident superadded, without which the vision cannot be performed; which additional the Scotists reject. Some, though they admit it, think the vision may be without it, and that it doth not *implicare contradictionem, visionem beatificam fieri sine lumine gloriæ, cum solo spectati Dei auxilio, quod item asserunt multi ex scholasticis, Paludi. in* 4. *dist.* 49. *q.* 1. *Art.* 3. *Concl.* 2. *Thom. de Argent, q.* 2. *Art.* 1. *Major. q.* 4. *Henr. quolibet.* 7. *Zumel.* 1. *p. q.* 12. *Art.* 5. *disp.* 2. *concl.* 3. *Ita Oncuphr. de virtute pœnitentia.* Whether there be any *verbum creatum*, the product of intellection, the Thomists are themselves divided. Their more common opinion is, that there is none, as *Ledesma* assures us; telling us also his reason, why he conceives there can be none. *Beati non formant verbum in videndo Deo, sed plus vident quam verbo creato dicere possunt——nam beatus per visionem beatam quamvis non videat infinite videt tamen infinitum* ——(which is their great argument against any intelligible species:) and he further adds, *sicut visio Dei, quæ est in ipso Deo, habet pro principio et specie intelligibili ipsam divinam Essentiam, et pro termino ipsam Divinam Essentiam; sic visio beatorum est ita supernaturalis, et divini ordinis, et participatio divinæ visionis ita perfecta, ut ipsa etiam habeat pro principio et specie intelligibili, divinam Essentiam, et pro termino sive verbo producto, ipsamet divinam Essentiam.* So that the principal and term of this vision are owned to be nothing else but the simple Divine essence. Concerning the formal act itself, it is much disputed, whether the creature's intellect do at all effectually concur to it, or whether God himself be not the only efficient or agent in this vision. Some stick not to affirm the latter, *Marsil. in* 3. *q.* 1. *Palud. in* 4. *dist.* 49. *q.* 1. *Art.* 2. (*referente Ledesma.*) and say plainly, that the action of the inferior agent wholly ceases, and the superior only acts; the same thing that D. M. Cansabon in his Enthusiasm charges one Maximus with, who in a book entitled κεφαλαια θεολογικα writes thus: *την αμεσον λαβων ενωσιν προς τον θεον ο νους την του νοειν και νοεισθαι παυτελως δυναμιν εχει σχολαζουσαι. That the soul taken into immediate union with God, loses all its knowing power:* (though this be not distinctively spoken of the state of glory:) and what doth this amount to? but that while they are eagerly contending about the saints' blessedness, and too curiously labouring to explicate the manner of their seeing God, they unawares destroy the subject of the question, and deny that they see him at all; and so upon the whole, dispute themselves into a worse than paganish infidelity. And even the rest, that agree in the sense of the passages above recited, will not be easily able to avoid the charge of as intolerable consequences; which it is my business here only to discover, and not to determine any thing in this controversy, whiles I tax the too much boldness of others, who adventure it. And here not to insist on the absurdity of what they say concerning the intelligible species in general, let it be considered, 1. That the Divine essence is said to be united to the intellect of the blessed, as an intelligible species. 2. That the intelligible species, in the business of intellection, and the

And by how much more we shall then know of his glory, so much more shall we understand that distance. Yet as he shall then enlarge the capacity of the soul he glorifies to a very vast comprehension, so shall the exhibition of his glory to it be fully adequate to its most enlarged capacity. They are as yet but obscure glimmerings we

intellect, become one another; do not remain distinct things united, but are identified. 2. That hence in understanding God, the intellect is deified and becomes God, which naturally follows from the two former, and is moreover expressly asserted in plain words. What need is there to press this doctrine with hard consequences? or how can it look worse than it doth already, with its own natural face? Nor can I apprehend which way it should be made look better. For should it lay claim to that favour, to be understood according to the usual sense of the peripatetic maxim, *intellectus, intelligendo, sit omnia;* it will be found manifestly to have precluded itself. That maxim is wont to be understood thus: That the intellect becomes that which it understands representative, by putting on the species or likeness of its object, the representation of it. For instance, when I form in my mind the notion of a mountain, my understanding becomes an ideal or spiritual mountain: it becomes that species (which is liable to more exception too than I shall now insist on, and looks more like the language of a poet than a philosopher) that is now formed there: and not the material mountain itself. But how shall this assertion, The understanding, by its act of understanding God, becomes God, be capable of that interpretation, *i. e.* It becomes his likeness, his idea, his representation now formed in it, when any such intervening likeness or representation is utterly denied; and that supposed species is said to be the simple Divine essence itself; and if the Divine essence itself be that species by which 'tis understood, will it not follow from that other *Aristotelian axiom*, (which with them must signify as much as a text from Saint Paul,) *scibile et scientia sunt idem:* That our very knowledge of God must be God too? or would they disown that maxim, sure when once the faculty is supposed deified, the act immanent in it cannot be a created accident: nor can that maxim (understood of the *scibile representativum*, or the species *scibilis*) be denied by them. And sure if the saints' knowledge of God, the likeness of him in their minds, be God; their holiness, the likeness of him in their hearts, must be so too. How absurd then would it be to use that scripture language, and speak of these under the names of God's image or likeness, when *similitude* and *identity* are notions so vastly disagreeing: and since a saints' knowledge and holiness here and in heaven differ but in degree: they can be here on earth, nothing but God dwelling in them. And supposing that Scotus have better defended than his adversaries impugned the real identity of the soul and its faculties, that must be deified too. However, what could be imagined more absurd, than that the substance of the soul should be a creature and its faculty God? Whence, then, do we think that modern Familists have fetched their admired nonsense? Whom have they had their original instructors? or who have taught them that brave, magnificent language of being Godded with God, and Christed with Christ, but these? Nor, sure, need they blush to be found guilty of so profoundly learned inconsistencies, or to speak absurdly after such patrons. And what should occasion these men so to involve themselves I cannot find or divine more than this, that they were not able to fasten upon any more tolerable sense of the word Κατοπτριζομενοι, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. 1 John iii. 2. but taking that in its highest pitch of significancy, all their arguments are generally levelled at this mark, to prove that no created species can possibly represent God *sicuti est*, and thence infer, that he cannot be seen by any created species in the glorified state, where he is to be seen *sicuti est*. But could we content ourselves with a modest interpretation of these words, and understand them to speak not of a *parity* but of a similitude only, between God's knowledge and ours, nor of an absolute omnimodous similitude, but comparative only; that is, that comparing our future with our present state, the former shall so far excel this, that in comparison thereof it may be said to be a knowing of God as we are known, and as he is; insomuch as our future knowledge of him shall approach so unspeakably nearer to his most perfect knowledge of us, and the truth of the thing, than our present knowledge doth or can: by such an interpreta-

can have of this glory; but so far as, without too bold curiosity, we may, and wherein Scripture light will give us any pre-apprehension of it, let us consider awhile the nature and the excellency of it. We cannot indeed consider these separately; for we can no sooner understand it to be glory, than we conceive it excellent: glory, in the proper notion of it, being nothing else but resplendent excellency, the lustre of excellency, or real worth made conspicuous. Yet as there is an excellency conceivable in the nature of it, that excellency whereof it is the splendour and brightness; so we must conceive a peculiar excellency of that very radiation, that splendour itself, wherewith it shines unto blessed souls. In its very nature it is the brightness of divine excellencies; in its present appearance, it shines in the highest excellency of that brightness; in its nature it excelleth all things else; in its present exhibition, compared with all its former radiations, it excelleth itself.

tion we are cast upon no such difficulties. For admit that no species can represent God as he is in the highest sense of these words; yet sure in the same sense wherein he can be seen by us as he is, he may be represented to us as he is. And what can be more frivolous than that fore-recited reasoning to the contrary? "There can be no created representation of God (*sicuti est*) adequate to the vision the blessed have of him; but they see more than any created representation can contain, for they see *infinitum*, though not *infinite*. For how must we understand the *infinitum* they are said to see? Materially or formally? Must we understand by it him that is infinite only, or as he is infinite? If it be said the latter, that is to say they see *infinite* too. If the former only, do not saints on earth see (*viz.* mentally, which is the vision we are speaking of) him who is infinite, in their present state, where it is acknowledged the knowledge is by species.

Yet would I not hence conclude that the knowledge saints shall have of God hereafter shall be by species; for my design in all this is but to discover the vanity of too positive and definitive conceptions concerning it, beyond the measure of God's revelation, and the ducture of clear and unentangled reason. All knowledge hath been thought to be by assimilation, *i. e.* by receiving the species or images of the things known. So the intellect is not really turned into the things which it understands, but only receives their species, wherewith it is united so closely, that it is therefore said to be like to them. Virtuosi of France, confer. 65.

One way or other it hath been judged necessary the mind should be furnished with such images of the thing it is said to understand; which therefore some have thought *connate*; others supplied by sense totally; others by a separate *intellectus agens*; which some have thought to be God himself; others one common intelligence; others a particular genius. So indispensably necessary it hath been reckoned unto intellection, that the office of furnishing the mind with the images of the things to be understood, should be performed by one or other. If any clearer explication can be given, or better way assigned, of the soul's knowing things, it cannot but be welcome to rational men. But I see no necessity or reason it should have a specifically distinct way of knowing here and in heaven. Much less that we should imagine to ourselves such a one as to that other state, as is altogether unaccountable and capable of no rational explication; and reckon it much more becoming to be silent, than on pretence of any mysteriousness in the things we discourse of, to talk absurdly and unintelligibly about them. A confessed ignorance in this case is becoming, to say with that great apostle, It doth not appear what we shall be; but to conclude and define such matters, is surely φρονειν παρ ο δει φρονειν.

As to the *nature* of this glory, 'tis nothing else but the conspicuous lustre of divine perfections. We can only guide our present conceptions of it, by the discovery God hath already given us of himself, in those several excellencies of his being, the great attributes that are convertible and one with him. When Moses besought him for a sight of his glory, he answers him with this, "I will proclaim my name before thee." His name, we know, is the collection of his attributes. The notion therefore we can hence form of this glory, is only such as we may have of a large volume by a brief synopsis or table; of a magnificent fabric, by a small model or platform; a spacious country, by a little landscape. He hath here given us a true representation of himself, not a full; such as will secure our apprehensions, being guided thereby, from error, not from ignorance. So as they swerve not in apprehending this glory, though they still fall short. We can now apply our minds to contemplate the several perfections which the blessed God assumes to himself, and whereby he describes to us his own being; and can in our thoughts attribute them all to him, though we have still but low defective conceptions of each one. As if we could at a distance distinguish the streets and houses of a great city; but every one appears to us much less than it is. We can apprehend somewhat of whatsoever he reveals to be in himself; yet when all is done, how little a portion do we take up of him! Our thoughts are empty and languid, strait and narrow, such as diminish and limit the Holy One. Yet so far as our apprehensions can correspond to the discovery he affords us of his several excellencies, we have a present view of the Divine glory. Do but strictly and distinctly survey the many perfections comprehended in his name, then gather them up, and consider how glorious he is! Conceive one glory resulting from substantial wisdom, goodness, power, truth, justice, holiness, that is, beaming forth from him who is all these by his very essence, necessarily, originally, infinitely, eternally, with whatsoever else is truly a perfection. This is the glory blessed souls shall behold for ever.

For the *excellency* of it, 'tis called by way of discrimination,[o] "The excellent glory." There was glory put upon Christ in the transfiguration; of which, when the apostle speaks, having occasion to mention withal the glory

[o] 2 Pet. i. 17.

of heaven itself, from whence the voice came; he adds to this latter, the distinguishing note of the excellent. He himself was eye-witness of the honour, and majesty, and glory, which the Lord Jesus then received; but beyond all this, the glory from whence the voice came, was the [p]excellent or stately glory, as the word imports. 'Tis a great intimation how *excellent* a glory this is, that 'tis said to be a glory [q]yet to be revealed; as if it had been said, whatever appearances of the Divine glories are now offered to your view, there is still somewhat undiscovered, somewhat behind the curtain, that will outshine all. You have not seen so much, but you are still to expect unspeakably more. Glory is then to shine in its noon-day strength and vigour: 'tis then in its meridian. Here, the riches of glory are to be displayed, certain treasures of glory, the plenitude and magnificence of glory. We are here to see him as he is; to know him as we are known of him. Certainly, the display of himself, the rays of his discovered excellency, must hold proportion with that *vision*, and be therefore exceeding glorious.[r] 'Tis the glory Christ had with the Father before the foundations of the world were laid; into the vision and communion whereof holy souls shall now be taken, according as their capacities can admit: that wherewithal his great achievements and high merits shall be rewarded eternally; that wherewith he is to be glorified in heaven, in compensation of having glorified his Father on earth, and finished the work whereto he was appointed. This cannot but be a most transcendent glory. 'Tis in sum, and in the language of the text, the glory of God's own face, his most aspectable, conspicuous glory. Whose transforming beams are productive of the glory impressed, the next ingredient into this blessedness, which will presently come to be spoken of; after we have given you some short account of,

2. The act of beholding: the vision or intuition itself, by which intervening the impression is made. Glory seems to carry in it a peculiar respect to the visive power; (whether corporeal or mental, as it is itself of the one kind or the other;) 'tis something to be contemplated, to be looked upon. And being to transmit an impression and consequent pleasure to another subject, it must necessarily be so, it can neither transform nor satisfy but as it is be-

p Μεγαλοπρεπης.
q 1 Pet. iv. 13.
r John xvii.

hold. And here the sensitive intuition I shall not insist on, as being less intended in the text, and the discourse of it less suitable to such as with a spiritual mind and design set themselves to inquire into the nature of the saints' blessedness. Yet, as this is the most noble, comprehensive, quick, and sprightly sense, so is the act of it more considerable, in the matter of blessedness, than any other of the outward man, and the most perfect imitation of the act of the mind; whence also this so often borrows the name of the other, and is called seeing. 'Tis an act indeed very proper and pertinent to a state of glory. By how much more any sensible object is glorious, (supposing the *sensorium* to be duly disposed and fortified, as must be here supposed,) so much is it the fitter object of sight; hence when we would express a glorious object, we call it conspicuous; and the less glorious or more obscure any thing is, the less visible it is, and the nearer it approaches to invisibility; whence that saying in the common philosophy,[a] "To see blackness is to see nothing." Whatsoever a glorified eye, replenished with a heavenly vitality and vigour, can fetch in from the many glorified objects that encompass it, we must suppose to concur to this blessedness. Now is the eye satisfied with seeing, which before never could.

But 'tis intellectual sight we are chiefly to consider here, that whereby we see him that is invisible, and approach the inaccessible light. 'The word here used, some critics tell us, more usually signifies the sight of the mind. And then, not a casual, superficial glancing at a thing, but contemplation, a studious, designed viewing of a thing when we solemnly compose and apply ourselves thereto; or the vision of prophets, or such as have things discovered to them by divine revelation, (thence called *chozim*, *seers*,) which imports (though not a previous design, yet) no less intention of mind in the act itself. And so it more fitly expresses that knowledge which we have, not by discourse and reasoning out of one thing from another, but by immediate intuition of what is nakedly, and at once, offered to our view, which is the more proper knowledge of the blessed in heaven. They shall have the glory of God so presented, and their minds so enlarged, as to comprehend much at one view; in which respect they may be said, in a great degree, to know as they are known, inasmuch as

[a] Arist. in 3. Meteorolog. Cap. de Iride.
[t] ΠΠ.

the blessed God comprehends all things at once, in one simple act of knowing. Yet that is not to be understood as if the state of glory should exclude all ratiocination, more than our present state doth all intuition; (for first and indemonstrable principles we see by their own light, without illation or argument;) nor can it be inconvenient to admit, that while the knowledge the blessed have of God, is not infinite, there may be use of their discursive faculty with great fruit and pleasure. [u]Pure intuition of God without any mixture of reasoning, is acknowledged (by such as are apt enough to be over-ascribing to the creature) peculiar to God alone. But as the blessed God shall continually afford (if we may speak of continuity in eternity, which yet we cannot otherwise apprehend) a clear discovery of himself, so shall the principal exercise and felicity of the blessed soul consist in that less laborious and more pleasant way of knowing, a mere admitting or entertaining of those free beams of voluntary light, by a grateful intuition; which way of knowing, the expression of sight, or beholding, doth most incline to, and that is, we are sure, the ordinary language of Scripture[x] about this matter.

CHAPTER IV.

The second ingredient into this blessedness considered, Assimilation to God, or his glory impreat. Wherein it consists, discovered in sundry propositions. The third ingredient. The satisfaction and pleasure which results, stated and opened.

And now, upon this vision of the blessed face of God, next follows, in the order of discourse,

The soul's perfect assimilation unto that revealed glory, or its participation thereof; (touching the order the things themselves have to one another, there will be consideration had in its proper place;) and this also must be considered as a distinct and necessary ingredient into the state of blessedness we are treating of. Distinct it is, for though the vision now spoken of doth include a certain kind of assimilation in it, as all vision doth, being only a reception

u Cognoscere Deum clare et intuitive est proprium et naturale soli Deo, sicut est proprium igni calefacere et soli illuminare. Ledesm. de divin. perfect. q. 8. Art. 7.

x Matt. v. 8. Heb. xii. 14.

of the species or likeness of the object seen; this assimilation we are to speak of, is of a very different kind. *That*, is such as affects only the visive and cognitive power, and that not with a real change, but intentional only, nor for longer continuance than the act of seeing lasts; but *this*, is total, real, and permanent. And surely it is of equal necessity to the soul's blessedness, to partake the glory of God, as to behold it; as well as to have the Divine likeness imprest upon it, as represented to it. After so contagious and overspreading a depravation as sin hath diffused through all its powers, it can never be happy without a change of its very crasis and temper throughout. A diseased, ulcerous body would take little felicity in gay and glorious sights: no more would all the glory of heaven signify to a sick, deformed, self-loathing soul.

It must therefore be all glorious within, have the Divine nature more perfectly communicated, the likeness of God transfused and wrought into it. This is the blessed work begun in regeneration; but how far it is from being perfected, we may soon find by considering, how far short we are of being satisfied in our present state, even in the contemplation of the highest and most excellent objects. How tasteless to our souls are the thoughts of God! How little pleasure do we take in viewing over his glorious attributes! the most acknowledged and adorable excellencies of his being! And whereunto can we impute it but to this, that our spirits are not yet sufficiently connaturalized to them? Their likeness is not enough deeply instamped on our souls. Nor will this be, till we awake. When we see better, we shall become better: when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. But do we indeed pretend to such an expectation? Can we think what God is, and what we are in our present state, and not confess these words to carry with them an amazing sound "we shall be like him!" How great a hope is this! How strange an errand hath the gospel into the world! How admirable a design! to transform men and make them like God! Were the dust of the earth turned into stars in the firmament, were the most stupendous poetical transformations assured realities; what could equal the greatness and the wonder of this mighty change? Yea, and doth not the expectation of it seem as presumptuous, as the issue itself would be strange? Is it not an over-bold desire; too daring a thought; a thing unlawful to be affected, as it seems impossible to be attained? It must

be acknowledged there is an appearance of high arrogance in aspiring to this, to be like God. And the very wish or thought of being so, in all respects, were not to be entertained without horror. 'Tis a matter therefore that requires some disquisition and explication, wherein that impressed likeness of God consists, which must concur to the saints' blessedness. In order hereunto then take the following propositions:

Prop. 1. There is a sense wherein to be like God is altogether impossible, and the very desire of it the most horrid wickedness. The prophet in the name of God charges the proud prince of Tyre with this, as an inexpiable arrogance, that he did set his heart as the heart of God; and upon this score challenges and enters the lists with him: Come, you that would fain be taken for a god, I'll make a sorry god of thee ere I have done; [a] Because thou hast set thy heart as the heart of God, I will set those upon thee, that shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and that shall defile thy brightness: And what! Wilt thou yet say in the hand of him that slayeth thee, I am a god? Thou shalt be a man and no god, in the hand of him that slayeth thee;—I have spoken it, saith the Lord God. He will endure no such imitation of him, as to be rivalled in the point of his Godhead. This is the matter of his jealousy; [b] "They have moved me to jealousy with not-God," so 'tis shortly and more smartly spoken in the original text. And see how he displays his threats and terrors hereupon in the following verses. This was the design and inducement of the first transgression, to be as gods. And indeed all sin may be reduced hither. What else is sin (in the most comprehensive notion) but an undue imitation of God? an exalting of the creature's will into a supremacy, and opposing it as such to the Divine? To sin, is to take upon us, as if we were supreme, and that there were no Lord over us; 'tis to assume to ourselves a deity, as if we were under no law or rule; as he is not under any, but what he is to himself. Herein, to be like God, is the very core and malignity of sin.

2. There is a just and laudable imitation of God, a likeness to him, that is matter of command, praise, and promise, as wherein both the duty, excellency, and blessedness of the reasonable creature doth consist; and which is in some respect inseparable from the nature of man. [c] We

a Ezek. xxviii. 6—10.
b Deut. xxxii. 21. c Eph. i. 5. μιμηται.

are required to be followers of God, as dear children, imitators the word is. David is commended as a man after God's own heart; though but now we saw in another, with what disdain and indignation it was resented, that he did set his heart as the heart of God. The [d] new creature, the new man, the first-fruits, as he is called, the flower of creation, is made after God. Saints expect, upon the assurance of his word, to be more fully like him, as we see in the text, and parallel places. Yea, man was made at first with a concreate similitude to God, which we know was the counsel of heaven, and the result and issue of that counsel, Gen. i. 26, 27. This is evident enough in itself, and needs no more words. But to make a further step in this business, observe next,

3. There can be no allowable imitation of any one, but with an exception as to some peculiarities that may belong to his special station, relation, and other circumstances of the condition in which he is; or with limitation to such things as are of common concernment unto both.[e] 'Tis commonly observed how naturally a people form their manners and fashions to the example of the prince; and there is no well-disposed ruler, but would take it well, to be imitated in things that are of common concernment to him and his subjects, that is, that concern him, not as he is a king, but as he is a man, or a Christian. To behold the transforming power of his own example, where it is such as begets a fair and unreproachful impress;[f] how his virtues circulate, (his justice, temperance, love of religion,) and produce their likeness among his people; 'twill be a glory, and cannot but be resented with some delight. We cast an honour upon them whom we imitate; for we acknowledge an excellency in them, (which is all that honouring imports in the first notion of it,) and that naturally is received with pleasure. But now, should subjects aspire to a likeness to their prince, in the proper appendages and acts of sovereignty; and because he is a glorious king, they will be such too; and assume the peculiar cognizances of regality; ascend the throne, sway the sceptre, wear the crown, enact laws, &c. There cannot be more of dutifulness and observance in the former imitation than there is of disloyalty and treason in this. A

d Jam. i. 18. Eph. iv. 24.
e Regis ad exemplum totus componitur orbis.
f Nam facere rectè bonus princeps faciendo docet. Cumque sic imperio maximus, exemplo major est. Velleius Paterculus, Rom. Hist. l. 2.

father is pleased to have his son imitate him, within such limits before mentioned; but, if he will govern the family, and fill up his room in all relations, this will never be endured.

4. There are some things to be found in the blessed God not so incommunicable and appropriate, but that his creatures may be said to have some participation thereof with him; and so far, to be truly like him. This participation cannot be univocal; as the nature of a living creature in general, is equal in men and brutes; so, it is a self-evident principle, that [g] *nothing can be common to God and an inferior being*. Nor is it only an equivocal, a participation of the same name, when the natures signified thereby are altogether diverse; but analogical, inasmuch as the things spoken, under the same names, of God and the creature, have a real likeness, and conveniency in nature with one another: and they are in God, primarily; in the creature, by dependence, and derivation: in him essentially, as being his very essence; in them but as accidents, (many of them,) adventitious to their beings; and so while they cannot be said to be the same things in them, as in him, are fitly said to be his likeness.

5. This likeness, as it is principally found in man, among all the terrestrial creatures; so hath it, in man, for its seat and subject, his soul or spiritual part. The effects of Divine wisdom, power, goodness, are every where visible throughout the whole creation; and as there is no effect, but hath something in it corresponding to its cause, (wherein it was its cause,) so every creature doth, some way or other, represent God. Some in virtues, some in life, some in being[h] only. The material world represents him, as a house the builder; but spiritual beings, as a child the father.[i] Other creatures (as one[k] fitly expresses it) carry his footsteps; these, his image; and that, not as drawn with a pencil, which can only express figure and colour; but as represented in a glass, which imitates action and motion. To give the pre-eminence therefore,[l] in this point, to the body of man, was a conceit so gross, that one

g Inter Deum et creaturam nihil est commune.

h Multis enim modis dici res possunt similes Deo; aliæ secundùm virtutem, et sapientiam, factæ; quia in ipso est virtus et sapientia non facta; aliæ in quantum solum vivunt, qui ille summe et primo vivit; aliæ in quantum sunt, quia ille summè? et primitus est. Aug. 80; quest. p. (mihi) 211.

i *του γαρ γενος εσμεν.*

k P. Molineus de cognitione Dei.

l Heathens have disdained and declaimed against so unworthy thoughts of God. *Τὸ δε θειον αυτο αορατον οφθαλμοις, αρρητον φωνη, αναφες σαρκι,* &c. Maximus Tyr. Dissert 1. The same author warns us to take heed, that

would wonder how it should obtain, at least in the Christian world.

Yet we find it expressly charged by[m] St. Augustin upon the anthropomorphites of old, (or melitonians, as he calls them, from one Melito the father of them,) not only, that they imagined God in a human shape, (which was their known conceit,) but that they stated God's image in man, in his body, not his soul. Nor are Van Helmont's fancies, about corporeal likeness, capable of excuse by any thing, but that they were a dream, (as they are fitly styled,) and not likely to impose upon the waking reason of any man.

6. This image or likeness of God in the spirit of man, representing what is communicable in him, is either natural or moral. There is first a natural image of God, in the soul of man, which is inseparable from it; and which it can never[n] divest itself of. Its very spiritual, immortal nature itself, is a representation of his. Its intellective and elective powers are the image of what we are constrained to conceive under the notion of the same powers in him. Yea, the same understanding, with the memory and will, in one soul, are thought a lively resemblance of the[o] triune Deity. But there is further a similitude of him in respect of moral[p] virtues or perfections answering to what we conceive in him, under that notion; his wisdom, (so far as it hath the nature of a moral virtue,) his mercy, truth, righteousness, holiness, &c. These two kinds or

we ascribe to God, Μητε μεγεθος, μητε χρωμα, μητε σχημα, μητε αλλο τι υλης παθος. Ibid.

Unto which purpose is that decantate distich of Homer, Ου γαρ σιτον, &c. And that saying of Pliny, *Qua propter effigiem Dei formamque quærere; imbecillitatis humanæ reor*, applied by Zanch. *de operibus Dei.* And we may see much of the like import alleged by Natal. Com. lib. i. p. 13. Which (by the way) discovers how flatly opposite the idolatry forbidden in the second commandment, is to the light of nature itself. Which hath been also the just apology of the ancient patrons of the Christian cause, for the simplicity of their worship in this respect; and their not imitating the pompous vanity of pagan image-worship. Ουτε θειας εικονας υπολαμβανι μεν ειναι τα αγαλματα, ατε μορφην αορατου θεου και ασωματου μη διαγραφοντες. Origen contr. Celsum. lib. 7.

To which purpose see at large, Min. Felix, Quod simulacrum Deo fingum? &c.

And surely it is as improvable against the same piece of Christian paganism. The usually assigned differences would easily be shown to be trifling impertinences.

m Corpus hominis non animum esse imaginem Dei: Aug. (if it be Augustine's) lib. de hæresibus. See Dr. Charleton of his image of God in man.

n Est Dei similitudo quædam, quam nemo vivens, nisi cum vita exuit: quam habet homo et volens, et nolens, &c. Bernard. de vitâ Solitar.

o D. Aug. (fusè) lib. 10. de Trinitat.

p Sed est alia, magis Deo propinqua, similitudo, quæ in virtutibus consistit. Bernard.

parts (as they may be called) of the Divine impress upon the spirits of men, are distinguished by some (I see not how properly) by the distinct names of image, denoting the former, and similitude the latter; answering, as is thought, to two Hebrew words of the like import;[q] but the things themselves are evidently enough distinct, *viz.* what perfects the nature of man *in genere physico*, as he is such a particular being in the universe; and what perfects him, *in genere morali*, as he is considerable in reference to a law or rule guiding him to blessedness, as his end.

7. 'Tis a likeness to God in respect of those moral excellencies or perfections, that is especially considerable by us, in reference to our present purpose; as more immediately relating to the soul's blessedness in God. By the former it hath a potentiality, by the latter a habitude, in reference thereunto. Or (to use terms, more liable to common apprehension) by the former it hath a remoter capacity, by the latter a present fitness; or, as the apostle expresses it, is made meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, *i. e.* considering this likeness as begun in the soul.

8. Besides what is thus (in the sense before expressed) communicable between God and man, there are some things so peculiarly appropriate to God, as that, in respect of them, there can be no formal likeness in the creature: and it would be impious boldness to aspire thereto. Many things of this kind might be mentioned; I shall only instance in two, wherein there is a manifest competition of the apostate world with him; and which are therefore more relative to practice: his sovereign authority, and his independency. In these, while men affect to imitate, they wickedly affront him. And here is the great controversy between the glorious God and the degenerous children of men. Every man would catch at a Godhead, and either assume it to himself, or cast it, many times, upon other creatures viler and more ignoble than himself; snatch the reigns of government out of God's hand, and exalt their own wills into an absoluteness, as liable to control from none; place and settle their dependence on their own wit, power, fortitude, industry; or, if that be a more hopeless course, (for they often find an entire Godhead too much for one creature, and are therefore constrained to parcel it out

[q] צלם דמות Zanch.

among many,) place their confidence and expectations in something else without them; do often that ridiculous thing, so worthy to be hooted at, make the congested dirt of the earth their trust, (r the righteous shall laugh at him, and say, Lo! this is the man that trusted in riches,) their wealth their strong tower; which only the name of the Lord is to his righteous ones. Yet, all the while, self is the centre and end in which all must meet and terminate. This at last carries away the assumed fictitious deity. And this thing, that is thus now made like God, is an idol, (which indeed signifies so much,) and this imitation of him, wicked idolatry; than which nothing more debases a reasonable soul, or divests man of himself, that till they redress this,[s] they give no proof of their being men. This assimilation of ourselves to God is very remote then from being a perfection; it is a most reproachful deformity: as we know imitations, if they be visibly affected, and strained too far, are always thought ridiculous by wise men.

9. Though, in respect of these incommunicable things, there cannot be a proper, formal, immediate similitude to God; yet, there ought to be a correspondency; which must be measured and estimated by the consideration of his state, and ours: whence it will appear, that what so properly appertains to him, and what ought to correspond thereto in us, do agree to each, upon one and the same intervening reason.

For instance, is he absolutely supreme inasmuch as he is the first being? the correspondent impression with us, and upon the same reason, must be a most profound, humble self-subjection, disposing our souls to constant obedience to him. Again, is he simply independent, as being self-sufficient and all in all? the impression with us must be a nothingness, and self-emptiness, engaging us to quit ourselves, and live in him. This is the only conformity to God, which with respect to his incommunicable excellencies, our creature-state can admit. It may be also styled a likeness to him, being a real conformity to his will concerning us, and his very nature as it respects us. We may conceive of it, as of the likeness between a seal and the stamp made by it; especially, supposing the inequality of parts in the seal to be by the protuberancy of what must form the signature. In that case there would be a like-

r Psal. lii. 6, 7. s Isa. xlvi. 8.

ness, *aliquatenus*, that is, an exact correspondency; but what would then be convex or bulging out in the seal, would be, as we know, concave or hollow in the impression. Such is the proportion between sovereignty and subjection, between self-fulness and self-emptiness. Whereas a similitude to God, in respect of his communicable perfections, is as that between the face and its picture, where no such difference is wont to appear.

10. Assimilation, or conformity to God, in both these respects, composes that excellent frame of moral perfections, which the Divine glory, beheld, impresses upon the soul; and which immediately conduces to its satisfaction and blessedness. I say, moral perfection, because that only is capable of being impressed by the intervening ministry of our own understanding; *viz.* by its vision, intimated, as was formerly observed, in that of the apostle, "We shall be like—for we shall see him," &c. Its natural perfections are antecedent and presupposed, therefore not so fitly to be understood here. And I say, both these ways; for, as we cannot form an entire idea of God, without taking in, together, his perfections of both sorts, communicable and incommunicable, (the former whereof must serve instead of a genus; the latter of a *differentia*, in composing the notion of God;[t]) so nor will his impress on us be entire, without something in it respecting both, in the senses already given. What it will contribute to future blessedness, we shall shortly see, in its place, when we have made a brief inquiry (which is the next thing, according to our order proposed) concerning,

Thirdly, The satisfaction that shall hence accrue. Where it will not be besides our purpose; to take some notice of the significancy of the word. And not to insist on its affinity to the word used for swearing, or rather, being sworn,[u] (which, an oath being the end of controversies, and beyond which we go no further, nor expect more, in way of testifying, would the more fitly here represent to us the soul in its non-ultra; having attained the end in all its motions and contentions,) its equal nearness to the word signifying the number of seven, is not altogether unworthy observation. That number is, we know, often used in Scripture, as denoting plentitude and perfection; and God hath, as it were, signalized it, by his rest on the seventh

t Thes. Salmu. de Deo immenso.
u שבע Which some think to be the Niphal of the same word notwithstanding the different punctuation of the ש.

day:[w] and if this were not designedly pointed at here in the present use of this word, (as it must be acknowledged to be frequently used where we have no reason to think it is with such an intendment) it may yet occasion us to look upon the holy soul now entered into the eternal sabbath,[x] the rest of God: which (secluding all respect to that circumstance) is, yet, the very substance and true notion of the thing itself, (to the consideration whereof I now pass,) under the word held forth to us. For this *satisfaction* is the soul's rest in God: its perfect enjoyment of the most perfect good; the expletion of the whole capacity of its will; the total filling up of that vast enlarged appetite; the perfecting of all its desires in delight and joy. Now delight or joy (for they differ not, save that the latter word is thought something more appropriate to reasonable nature) is fitly defined, *the rest of the desiring faculty in the thing desired.*[y] Desire and delight are but two acts of love, diversified only by the distance or presence of the same object: which, when 'tis distant, the soul, acted and prompted by love, desires, moves towards it, pursues it; when present and attained, delights in it, enjoys it, stays upon it, satisfies itself in it, according to the measure of goodness it finds there. Desire is therefore love in motion; delight is love in rest. And of this latter, delight or joy, Scripture evidently gives us the notion,[z] he will rejoice over thee with joy, (unto which is presently added as exegetical,) he will rest in his love; which resting can be but the same thing with being satisfied. This *satisfaction* then is nothing else but the repose and rest of the soul amidst infinite delights; its peaceful acquiescence, having attained the ultimate term of all its motions, beyond which it cares to go no further; the solace it finds in an adequate, full good; which it accounts enough for it, and beyond which, it desires no more; reckons its state as good as it can be, and is void of all hovering thoughts, (which perfect rest must needs exclude,) or inclination to change.

And so doth this being satisfied, not only generally signify

w How fit a symbol it is of God's sabbatic rest, see Dr. Mere's defence of his Philosophical Cabbala from Philo Judæus.

x Erit ibi vere maximum Sabbatum, non habens vesperam, quod commendavit Dominus in primis operibus mundi; ut legitur, et requievit die Septimo—Dies enim Septimus etiam nos ipsi erimus, quando ipsus fuerimus benedictionum et sanctificationum pleni atque referti—ibi vacabimus et videbimus, videbimus et amabimus, amabimus et laudabimus, &c. Aug. de civit. Dei. lib. 22. c. 30. vid. eund de civit. Dei, l. 17. c. 4.

y Quies appetitus in appetibili. Aquin. Sun.

z Zeph. iii. 17.

the soul to be at rest; but it specifies that rest; and gives us a distinct account of the nature of it. As, that it is not a forced, violent rest; such as proceeds from a beguiled ignorance, a drowsy sloth, a languishing weakness, or a desire and hope of happiness, by often frustrations baffled into despair, (to all which, the native import and propriety of that word satisfaction doth strongly repugn.) But it discovers it to be a natural rest; I mean, from an internal principle. The soul is not held in its present state of enjoyment by a strong and violent hand; but rests in it by a connaturalness thereunto; is attempered to it, by its own inward constitution and frame. It rests not as a descending stone, intercepted by something by the way, that holds and stops it; else it would fall further: but as a thing would rest in its own centre; with such a rest as the earth is supposed to have in its proper place; that, being hung upon nothing, is yet unmoved, *ponderibus librata suis, equally balanced by its own weight every way.*

It is a *rational, judicious* rest; upon certain knowledge that its present state is simply best, and not capable of being changed for a better. The soul cannot be held under a perpetual cheat, so as always to be satisfied with a shadow. It may be so befooled for a while, but if it remain satisfied, in a state that never admits of change, that state must be such, as commends itself to the most thoroughly informed reason and judgment. It is hence a *free, voluntary, chosen* rest; such as God professes his own to be in Zion;[a] This is my rest, here will I dwell, for I have desired it. It is a *complacential* rest, wherein the soul abides steady, bound only by the chords of love; a rest in the midst of pleasantness; [b]The Lord is my portion, the lots are fallen to me in *amœnitatibus;* it cannot be more fitly expressed than *amidst pleasantnesses:* and this speaks not only what the Psalmist's condition was, but the sense and account he had of it. That temper of mind gives us some idea of that contentful, satisfied abode with God, which the blessed shall have. He intimates, how undesirous he was of any change. [c]Their sorrows (he told us above) should be multiplied that hasten after another god. Hereafter there will be infinitely less appearance of reason for any such thought. Now, it is the sense of a holy soul, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none I desire on earth besides thee:" *q. d.* Heaven and

a Psal. cxxxii. 14.
b Psal. xvi. 6. בנעימים c Ver. 4.

earth yield not a tempting object, to divert me from thee. 'tis now so, at some times, when faith and love are in their triumph and exaltation (but the Lord knows how seldom!) but much more when we see him as he is, and are satisfied with his likeness! It's an *active, vigorous* rest. Action about the end shall be perpetuated here, though action towards it ceases. 'Tis the rest of an awakened, not of a drowsy, sluggish soul; of a soul satisfied, by heavenly sensations and fruitions, not incapable of them, or that hath its powers bound up by a stupifying sleep. It's the rest of *hope*, perfected in fruition, not lost in despair; of satisfied, not defeated, expectation. [d]Despair may occasion rest to a man's body, but not to his mind; or a cessation from further endeavours, when they are constantly found vain, but not from trouble and disquiet; it may suspend from action, but never satisfy. This satisfaction therefore speaks both the reality and nature of the soul's rest in glory; that it rests; and with what kind of rest.

CHAPTER V.

The relative consideration of these three ingredients of the saints' blessedness; where it is propounded to show particularly, 1. What relation vision hath to assimilation. 2. What both these have to satisfaction. The relation between the two former, inquired into. An entrance upon the much larger discourse, what relation and influence the two former have towards the third: What vision of God's face or glory, contributes towards satisfaction, estimated from the consideration, 1. Of the object, the glory to be beheld; as 'tis divine, entire, permanent, appropriate.

THUS far have we viewed the parts or necessary concurrence, of which the blessedness of the saints must be composed absolutely and severally each from other: we proceed,

Secondly, To consider them relatively, *viz.* in the mutual respects they bear one to another; as they actually

d I think it not worth the while to engage in the dispute (so much agitated between the Thomists and Scotists) whether blessedness do formally consist in this satisfying fruition, or in the antecedent vision; this satisfaction is certainly inseparable from it, and I see not how to be excluded out of its formal notion: 'tis not vision as vision, but as satisfying, that makes us happy; and to talk of the satisfaction or pleasure which the understanding hath in knowing is insipid; while the soul understanding, *i. e.* the mind, knows, 'tis the soul enjoying, *i. e.* the will, is pleased and finds content: and till the soul be fully contented, it is not blessed; and it is by being so, when it saith, "Now I am fully satisfied, I have enough, I desire no more."

compose this blessed state. Wherein we shall show particularly: 1. The relation, by way of influence, and dependence, between *vision* and *assimilation:* and—Between both these and the *satisfaction* that ensues: which latter I intend more to dwell upon; and only to touch the former, as a more speculative and less improvable subject of discourse, in my way to this.

1. First, It may be considered—What relation there may be between vision of God, and assimilation, or being made like to him; and it must be acknowledged (according to what is commonly observed of the mutual action of the understanding and will) that the sight of God, and likeness to him, do mutually contribute each towards other. The sight of God assimilates, makes the soul like unto him; that likeness more disposes it for a continued renewed vision. It could never have attained the beatifical vision of God, had it not been prepared thereto, by a gradual previous likeness to him.[a] For righteousness (which we have shown qualifies for this blessedness) consists in a likeness to God; and it could never have been so prepared, had not some knowledge of God introduced that conformity and yielding bent of heart towards him. For the entire frame of the[b] new man, made after the image of God, is renewed in knowledge. But, as notwithstanding the circular action of the understanding and will upon one another, there must be a beginning of this course somewhere, and the understanding is usually reckoned the ἡγεμονικὸν, *the first mover*, the leading faculty: so, notwithstanding the mutual influence of these two upon each other, seeing hath a natural precedency, and must lead the way unto being like; which is sufficiently intimated in the text, "I shall behold thy face," and then "I shall be satisfied with thy likeness;" and more fully in that parallel scripture, "We shall be like him, for we shall see him," &c. From whence also, and from the very nature of the thing, we way fitly state the relation of the first of these to the second, to be that of a cause to its effect; sight begets likeness, is antecedent to it, and productive of it. That is, the face or glory of God seen; that glory

a Which necessity of a likeness to God to dispose for the vision of him, is excellently expressed by a Platonic philosopher. The Divine nature τὸ θεῖον, which he saith, is liable to no sense, μονοὶ δὲ τῶι τῆς ψυχῆς καλλίσ῾ωι, καὶ καθαρωτατωι, καὶ νοερωτατωι καὶ κουφοτάτωι, καὶ πρεσβυτάτωι, ὁρατὸν δι' ὁμοιότητα, &c. *is yet visible to that in the soul, which is most beautiful, most pure, most perspicuous, most sublime, most noble, in respect of a certain similitude and cognation that is between them.* Max. Tyr.

b Col. iii. 10.

in conjunction with our vision of it; for the vision operates not, but according to the efficaciousness of the thing seen; nor can that glory have any such operation, but by the intervention of vision. 'Tis therefore the glory of God seen, as seen, that assimilates, and impresses its likeness upon the beholding soul; and so its causality is that of an objective cause, (which, whether it belong to the efficient or final, I shall not here dispute) that operates only as it is apprehended: so introducing its own form and similitude into the subject it works upon. Such a kind of cause were Jacob's streaked rods of the production that ensued: and such a cause is any thing whatever, that begets an impression upon an apprehensive subject, by the mediation and ministry, whether of the fancy or understanding.—This kind of causality the word hath in its renewing, transforming work; and the sacraments, wherein they are causal of real physical mutations on the subjects of them. So much of the image of God as is here impressed upon souls by gospel-dispensations, so much is impressed of his glory. The work of grace is glory begun. And now, as glory initial, and progressive in this life, enters at the eye; (c)beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed; so doth perfect and consummate glory in the other life. For we have no reason to imagine to ourselves any alteration in the natural order the powers of the soul have towards each other, by its passing into a state of glory.

The *object* seen, is unspeakably efficacious; the *act* of intuition is full of lively vigour; the *subject* was prepared and in a disposition before; and what should hinder, but this glorious effect should immediately ensue? as the sun no sooner puts up his head above the hemisphere, but all the vast space, whither it can diffuse its beams, is presently transformed into its likeness, and turned into a region of light. What more can be wanting to cause all the darkness of atheism, carnality, and every thing of sin, for ever to vanish out of the awakening soul, and an entire frame of holiness to succeed; but one such transforming sight of the face of God? One sight of his glorious majesty presently subdues, and works it to a full subjection; one sight of his purity makes it pure; one sight of his loveliness turns it into love; and such a sight always remaining, the impress remains always actually (besides that it is in

(c) 2 Cor. iii. 18.

itself most habitual and permanent, in the soul's now confirmed state) fresh and lively.

The *object* hath quite another aspect upon a wicked soul, when it awakes; and the *act* of seeing is of another kind; therefore no such *effect* follows. Besides, the *subject* is otherwise disposed; and therefore as the sun enlightens not the inward parts of an impervious dunghill, but it enlightens air; so the sight of God transforms and assimilates at last, not a wicked, but it doth a godly, soul. That which here makes the greatest difference in the temper of the subject is love. I look upon the face of a stranger and it moves me not; but upon a friend, and his face presently transforms mine into a lively cheerful aspect. [d]As an iron sharpens iron, so doth the face of a man his friend; puts a sharpness and quickness into his looks. The soul that loves God, opens itself to him, admits his influences and impressions, is easily moulded and wrought to his will, yields to the transforming power of his appearing glory. There is no resistant principle remaining, when the love of God is perfected in it; and so overcoming is the first sight of his glory upon the awaking soul, that it perfects it, and so his likeness, both at once. But enmity fortifies the soul against him, as with bars and doors; averts it from him; carries with it a horrid, guilty consciousness, which fills it with eternal despair and rage, and inwraps it in the blackness of darkness forever.

2. Both the *vision* of God, and *likeness* to him, must be considered in their relation to the consequent *satisfaction*, and the influence they have in order thereto. I say, both; for though this satisfaction be not expressly and directly referred by the letter of the text, to the sight of God's face; yet its relation thereto, in the nature of the thing, is sufficiently apprehensible and obvious; both mediate, in respect of the influence it hath towards the satisfying assimilation; and immediate, (which we are now to consider,) as it is so highly pleasurable in itself; and is plainly enough intimated in the text; being applied, in the same breath, to a thing so immediately and intimately conjunct with this vision, as we find it is. Moreover, supposing that likeness here do (as it hath been granted it may) signify objective glory also, as well as subjective, and repeat what is contained in the former expression, "the face of God," the reference satisfaction hath to this vision (which the re-mention of its object, though under a varied form of expres-

d Prov. xxvii. 17.

sion, supposes) will be more express, therefore we shall show, 1. What the vision of the Divine glory contributes to the satisfaction of the blessed soul, and what felicity it must needs take herein: which cannot but be very great, whether we respect—the glory seen, the object of this vision; or—the act of vision, or intuition itself.

1. The object, the glory beheld. What a spring of pleasure is here! what rivers of pleasures flow hence! [e]In thy presence (saith the Psalmist) is fulness of joy: at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore. The awaking soul, having now passed the path of life, (drawn through Sheol itself, the state of deadly-head,) appears immediately in this presence; and what makes this presence so joyous, but the pleasant brightness of this face? To be in the presence of any one, and before his face, in conspectu, are equivalent expressions; therefore the apostle, quoting this passage, renders it thus, [f]Thou hast filled me with gladness, by thy countenance; now in this glorious presence, or within view of the face of God, is fulness of joy, *i. e.* joy under satisfaction. And the Apostle Jude, speaking of this presence under this name, (a presence of glory,) tells us of an [g]exceeding joy, a jubilation, (an ἀγαλλίασις,) that shall attend the presentment of saints there. The holy soul now enters the divine [h]Shechinah, the chamber of presence of the great King, the habitation of his holiness and glory, the place where his honour dwelleth. Here his glory surrounds it with encircling beams; 'tis beset with glory, therefore surely also filled with joy. When the vail is drawn aside; or we are within the vail; in that very presence whither Jesus the forerunner is for us entered, (through that path of life,) O the satisfying overcoming pleasure of this sight! Now that is to us revealed or unvailed glory, which was hidden before. Here the [i]glory set in majesty, (as the expression is, concerning the glory of the temple) is presented to view openly and without umbrage. God is now no longer seen through an obscuring medium. They are not now shadowed glimmerings, transient, oblique glances, but the direct beams of full-eyed glory, that shine upon us. The discovery of this glory is the ultimate product of that infinite wisdom and love, that have been working from eter-

e Psal. xvi. 11.
f Acts ii. 28. which indeed is the Seventy's reading of the Psalmist's words.
g κατενωπιον της δοξης. h Ver. 24.
i Ezek. vii.

nity, and for so many thousand years, through all the successions of time, towards the heirs of salvation. The last and complete issue of the great achievements, sharp conflicts, glorious victories, high merits of our mighty Redeemer. All these end in the opening of heaven (the laying of this glory as it were common) to all believers. This is the upshot and close of that great design: will it not, think ye, be a satisfying glory? The full blessedness of the redeemed, is the Redeemer's reward. He cannot be satisfied in seeing his seed, if they should be unsatisfied. He cannot behold them with content if his heart tell him not, that he hath done well enough for them. [k]God would even be ashamed to be called their God, had he not made provision for their entertainment worthy of a God. 'Tis the season of Christ's triumphs, and saints are to enter into his joy. 'Tis the appointed jubilee, at the finishing of all God's works from the creation of the world, when he shall purposely show himself in his most adorable majesty, and when Christ shall appear in his own likeness; (he appeared in another likeness before;) surely glory must be in its exaltation in that day. But take a more distinct account, how grateful a sight this glory will be, in these following particulars:

I. It is the Divine glory. Let your hearts dwell a little upon this consideration. 'Tis the glory of God, *i. e.* the glory which the blessed God both enjoys and affords, which he contemplates in himself, and which rays from him to his saints; 'tis the felicity of the Divine Being. It satisfies a Deity, will it not a worm? 'Tis a glory that results and shines from him; and in that sense also divine, (which here I mainly intend,) the beauty of his own face, the lustre of divine perfections; every attribute bears a part, all concur to make up this glory. And here pretermitting those which are less liable to our apprehension, his eternity, immensity, simplicity, &c. (of which, not having their like in us, we are the more incapable to form distinct conceptions; and consequently of perceiving the pleasure that we may hereafter, upon the removal of other impediments, find in the contemplation of them,) let us bethink ourselves, how admirable and ravishing the glory will be.

1. Of his unsearchable wisdom, which hath glory peculiarly annexed and properly belonging to it. Glory is, as it were, by inheritance, due to wisdom. [l]The wise shall

k Heb. xi. 16. l Prov. iii. 35. Job xii.

inherit glory. And here now, the blessed souls behold it in its first seat, and therefore in its prime glory: wisdom, counsel, understanding, are said to be with him; as if no where else. Twice we have the apostle describing glory to God, under the notion of [m]only wise; which is but an acknowledging him glorious in this respect. Wisdom, we know, is the proper and most connatural glory of intellectual nature; whether as it relates to speculation, when we call it knowledge; or, action, when 'tis prudence. How pleasant will the contemplation be, of the Divine wisdom, in that former notion! When in that glass, that *speculum æternitatis*, we shall have the lively view of all that truth, the knowledge whereof can be any way possible and grateful to our natures; and in his light, see light! When all those vast treasures of wisdom and knowledge which already, by their alliance to[n] Christ, saints are interested in, shall lie open to us! When the tree of knowledge shall be without enclosure; and the most voluptuous epicurism, in reference to it, be innocent! Where there shall neither be lust, nor forbidden fruit; no withholding of desirable knowledge, nor affectation of undesirable! When the pleasure of speculation shall be without the toil; and that maxim be eternally antiquated, that increased knowledge increases sorrow! As to the other notion of it; how can it be less grateful to behold the wisdom that made and governed the world; that compassed so great designs? and this, no longer in its effects, but in itself? Those works were honourable and glorious, sought of all them that have pleasure in them. What will be the glory of their cause? It would gratify some men's curiosity to behold the unusual motion of some rare *automaton;* but an ingenious person would, with much more pleasure, pry into the secret springs of that motion, and observe its inward frame and parts, and their dependence and order to each other. 'Tis comely to behold the exterior economy of a well governed people, when great affairs are, by orderly conduct, brought to happy issues; but to have been at the helm; to have seen the pertinent, proper application of such and such maxims to the incident cases; to have known all the reasons of state; heard debates; observed with what great sagacity inconveniencies have been foreseen, and with what diligence prevented; would much more gratify an inquiring genius. When the records of eternity shall be exposed to view; all the counsels and results of that profound wisdom

m Rom. xvi. 27. 1 Tim. i. 17. n Col. ii. 3.

looked into: how will it transport! when it shall be discerned, Lo! thus were the designs laid; here were the apt junctures, and admirable dependencies of things; which, when acted upon the stage of the world, seemed so perplexed and cross, so full of mysterious intricacy! If St. Paul were so ravished at those more obscure appearances of Divine wisdom, which we find him admiring, (Rom. xi. 33.) O the depths, &c. what satisfaction will it yield, to have a perfect model of the deep thoughts and counsels of God presented to open view! How is the happiness of Solomon's servants magnified, that had the privilege continually to stand before him, and hear his wisdom! But this happiness will be proportionably greater, as Solomon's God is greater than he.

2. The glory of his power will add comeliness to the object of this vision. Power duly placed and allayed is lovely. Beauty consists much in a symmetry or proportion of parts. So must there be a concurrence of Divine perfections, to compose and make up the beautiful complexion of his face; to give us a right aspect, the true idea of God: and here his power hath a necessary ingrediency. How incoherent, and disagreeing with itself, were the notion of an impotent God! His power gives lively strokes to his glory. 'Tis called[o] glorious power, or the power of glory; yea, 'tis simply called glory itself: the apostle tells us[p] Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, when 'tis plain he means power. And the same apostle prays on the behalf of the [q]Ephesians, that God would grant them according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might, &c. How frequently are power and glory ascribed to him in conjunction! intimating that, as he is powerful, he is glorious. And certainly, even this glory cannot but cast a grateful aspect upon the blessed soul, and be infinitely pleasant to behold. What triumphs doth it now raise in gracious spirits, to behold the [r] exertions of it in his works; to read its descriptions in his word; while as yet he holds back the face of his throne; while the countenance of enthroned majesty cannot be seen; when so little a portion is heard of him, and the thunder of his [s] power so little understood! The infinitely fainter rays of this power in a creature; power in that unspeakable diminution and abatement; that derived, precarious power; when 'tis innocently used, is observed

o κρατος της δοξης. Col. i. 11. p Rom. vi. 4.
q Chap. iii. 16. r Job xxvi. 9. s Ver. 14.

with pleasure. Here is power in the throne, power in its chief and highest seat; essential, and self-originated power; the root and fountain, the very element of power; power in its proper situation, in its native place, to which it belongs.[t] God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God. It languishes in a creature, as in an alien subject. If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong,[u] saith Job; *q. d.* "Created power is not worth the speaking of; here is the power that deserves the name, that is so indeed." How satisfying a pleasure will this afford, to contemplate this radical power! this all-creating, all-ruling power, the principle of all action, motion and life, throughout the whole creation! This will be as natural a pleasure, as the child takes in the mother's bosom, and in embracing the womb that bare it. How grateful to behold, whence the vast frame of nature sprang! what stretched out the heavens, established the earth, sustained all things! what turned the mighty wheels of Providence, throughout all the successions of time! what ordered and changed times and seasons, chained up devils, restrained the outrages of a tumultuous world, preserved God's little flock! especially, what gave being to the new creation![x] (the exceeding greatness of power that wrought in them that believed, &c.) what made hearts love God, embrace a Saviour! what it was that overcame[y] their own, and made them a willing people in that memorable day! How delightful a contemplation to think, with so enlarged an understanding, of the possible effects of this power; and so far as a creature can range into infinity, to view innumerable creations, in the creative power of God! And yet how pleasant to think, not only of the extents, but of the restraints of this power; and how, when none could limit, it became ordinate, and did limit itself! that since it could do so much, it did no more; turned not sooner a degenerous world into flames; withheld itself from premature revenge, that had abortived the womb of love, and cut off all the hopes of this blessed eternity that is now attained! This also speaks the greatness of power: [a]Let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, the Lord is gracious, long-suffering, &c.— This was his mightiest power, whereby he overcame himself: *Fortior est qui se*, &c.

t Psal. lxii. 11. Power to God, *Hebr.*
u Chap. xxvi. x Eph. i. 19, 20. y Psal. cx. 3.
z Posse et nolle nobile. a Numb. xiv. 17, 18.

3. And what do we think of the ravishing aspects of his love, when it shall, now, be open faced, and have laid aside its vail! when his amiable smiles shall be checkered with no intermingled frowns; the light of that pleasing countenance be obscured by no intervening cloud! when goodness, which is love issuing into benefaction, or doing good; grace, which adds freeness unto goodness; mercy, which is grace towards the miserable; shall conspire in their distinct, and variegated appearances to set off each other, and enhance the pleasure of the admiring soul! when the wonted doubts shall all cease, and the difficulty vanish, of reconciling (once necessary) fatherly severity with love! when the full sense shall be unfolded to the life, of that description of the Divine nature, "God is love;" and the soul be no longer put to read the love of God in his name, (as Moses was when the sight of his face could not yet be obtained,) shall not need to spell it by letters and syllables; but behold it in his very nature itself, and see how intimately essential it is to the Divine Being! How glorious will this appearance of God be, (we, now, hear, something of the[b] glory of his grace,) and how satisfying the tuition of that glory! Now is the proper season for the full exercise and discovery of love. This day hath been long expected, and lo, now 'tis dawned upon the awakening soul; it's now called forth; its senses unbound; all its powers inspirited, on purpose, for love-visions and enjoyments: 'tis now to take its fill of loves. The apostle's ecstatical prayer is now answered to the highest degree possible with respect to such a one. He is now, [c]according to the riches of Divine glory, strengthened with might, by the Spirit, in the inner man—to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; to know that love that passeth knowledge, &c. He shall now no longer stand amazed, spending his guesses, what manner of love this should be; and expecting fuller discoveries, further effects of it, that did not yet appear; but sees the utmost, all that his soul can bear, or wish to see. He hath now traced home the rivulets to their fountain, the beams to the very sun of love. 'He hath got the prospect, at last, into that heart, where the great thoughts of love were lodged from everlasting; where all its counsels and designs were formed. He sees what made God become a man; what clothed a Deity with human flesh; what made eternity become the birth of time, when come to its partu-

b Eph. i. 6. c Eph. iii. 16, 17, 18, 19.

rient[d] fulness; what moved the heart of the Son of God to pitch his tabernacle among men; what engaged him to the enterprise of redeeming sinners; what moved him so earnestly to contest with a perishing world, led him at last to the cross, made him content to become a sacrifice to God, a spectacle to angels and men, in a bitter reproachful death, inflicted by the sacrilegious hands of those whom he was all this while designing to save. The amazed soul now sees into the bottom of this design; understands why itself was not made a prey to Divine revenge; whence it was, that it perished not in its enmity against God; that he was not provoked by the obstinacy of its disobedience, and malice of its unbelief, beyond the possibility of an atonement; why he so long suffered its injurious neglects of him, and unkind repulses of a merciful Saviour; and persuaded, till at last he overcame, made the averse heart yield, the careless disaffected soul cry out, "Where is my God?" Now a Christ, or I perish? All this is now resolved into love; and the adoring soul sees how well the effects agree to their cause, and are owned by it. Nothing but heaven itself, that gives the sense, can give the notion of this pleasure.

4. Nor will the glory of holiness be less resplendent; that great attribute which, even in a remote descent from its original, is frequently mentioned with the adjunct of [e]beauties. What loveliness will those beauties add to this blessed face! Not here to insist (which is besides my purpose) upon the various notions of holiness: real holiness Scripture states in purity, an alienation from sin; 'tis set in opposition to all filthiness, to all moral impurity: and in that notion it best agrees to God; and comprehends his righteousness and veracity, and indeed, whatever we can conceive in him, under the notion of a moral excellency. This may therefore be styled a transcendental attribute, that as it were runs through the rest, and casts a glory upon every one: 'tis an attribute of attributes. Those are fit predications, holy power, holy truth, holy love, &c. And so it is the very lustre and glory of his other perfections; [g] he is glorious in holiness. Hence in matters of greatest moment, he is sometimes brought in [h] swearing by his holiness, (which he is not wont to do by any one single attribute,) as though it were a *fuller*

d Gal. iv. 4. e Psal. cx. 3, &c.
f 2 Cor. vii. 1. g Exod. xv. 11.
h Psal. lxxxix. 35. Amos iv. 2.

expression of himself, an *adæquatior conceptus*, than any of the rest.

What is of so great an account with him, will not be of least account with his holy ones, when they appear in his glorious presence. Their own holiness is a conformity to his; the likeness of it. And as their beholding it forms them into that likeness; so that likeness makes them capable of beholding it with pleasure. Divine holiness doth now more ravish than affright. This hath been the language of sinful dust.[i] Who can stand before this holy God? when holiness hath appeared armed with terrors, guarded with flames, and the Divine Majesty been represented as a consuming fire. Such apprehensions sin and guilt naturally beget; the sinners of Sion were afraid. But so far as the new man is put on, created after God, and they, who were darkness, are made light in the Lord, he is not under any notion more acceptable to them, than as he is the Holy One. They love his law, because holy; and love each other because holy; and hate themselves because they are no more so. Holiness hath still a pleasing aspect when they find it in an ordinance, meet it in a sabbath; every glimpse of it is lovely. But with what triumphs hath the holiness of God himself been celebrated even by saints on earth![k] Who is a God like unto thee, glorious in holiness! There is none holy as the Lord, for there is none besides thee. Sing unto the Lord, all ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. What thoughts will they have of it,[l] when their eyes can behold that glory; when they immediately look on the archetypal holiness, of which their own is but the image; and can view that glorious pattern, they were so long in framing to? How joyfully will they then fall in with the rest of the heavenly host; and join in the same adoration and praise, in the same acclamation and triumphant song, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth! How unconceivable is the pleasure of this sight; when the *αὐτὸ καλὸν*, the first pulchritude, the original beauty offers itself to view! Holiness is intellectual beauty; Divine holiness is the most perfect and the measure of all other; and what is

i 1 Sam. vi.

k Exod. xv. 11. 1 Sam. ii. 2. Psal. xxx. 4. xcvii. 12.

l Si ergo pulchritudo divina nondum visa, sed solum credita et sperata, tantum ignem desiderii excitat: Quid faciet cum, remoto velo, ut est in se conspicitur? Omnino id faciet ut torrente voluptatis illius inebriati, neque velimus, neque possimus, vel ad punctum temporis, oculos ab ea divertere. Ballarm. 4o ascens. mentis ad Deum, grad. 2.

the pleasure and satisfaction, of which we speak, but the perfection and rest of love? Now[m] love, as love, respects and connotes a pulchritude in its object. And then the most perfect pulchritude, the ineffable and immortal pulchritude, that cannot be declared by words, or seen with eyes, (they are a heathen's[n] expressions concerning it,) how can it but perfectly and eternally please and satisfy?

And we are told by the great pagan theologue,[o] in what state we can have the felicity of that spectacle. Not in our present state; when we have, indeed, but obscure representations of such things as are, with souls of highest excellency; but when we are associated to the *blessed quire*;[p] When we are delivered from the body; (which we now carry about, *as the oyster doth its*[q] *shell*;) when we are no longer sensible of the evils of time. When we wholly apply ourselves to that blessed vision; are admitted to the beholding of the simple permanent sights; and behold them,[r] being ourselves pure, in the pure light: then have we the view of the *bright shining pulchritude*, &c.

2. It is an entire or united glory. We have something of the Divine glory shining now upon us; but the many interpositions cause a various refraction of its light. We have but its dispersed rays, its scattered, dishevelled beams: we shall then have it perfect and full. 'Tis the eternal glory we are hereafter to behold. Eternity (as the notion of it is wont to be stated) is a duration that excludes both succession and end. And if it be an unsuccessive duration, (though it is more difficult to apprehend how the being or enjoyments of a creature can come under that mensuration, or how there can be any such,) the glory presented to the view of a blessed soul, cannot be presented by parcels, but at once.[s] In our temporary state, while we are under the measure of time, we are not capable of the fulness of blessedness or misery; for time exists not altogether but by parts. And indeed we can neither enjoy nor suffer more, at once, than can be compassed within one moment; for no more exists together. But our relation to eternity (according to this notion of it) will render the same invariable appearance of glory, always presentaneous

m Max. Tyr. dissert. 11. n Id. ibid.

o Plato in Phædro passim. (Though he there speaks these things as the memoirs of his supposed pre-existent soul.)

p Εὐδαίμονι χορῷ.

q Ὀστρεου τροπον.

r Ἐν ἀυγῃ καθαραι, καθαροι ὀντες, καλλος λαμπρον.

s Æternitas est interminabilis vitæ tota simul et perfecta possessio. Boeth.

to us, in the entire fulness of it. We read indeed [t] of certain ὑστερήματα πίστεως, *afterings of faith*, (as it may be significantly enough rendered, let but the novelty of the expression be pardoned,) things lacking we read it; but there will be here no ὑστερήματα δόξης, *afterings of glory*. What is perfect admits no increase; 'tis already full: and why should not a full glory satisfy? There is here no expectation of (greater) future, to abate the pleasure of present discoveries. Why therefore shall not this satisfaction be conceived full and perfect? It must be the fulness of joy.

3. 'Tis permanent glory; a never fading, unwithering glory,[u] (ἄφθαρτος ἀμάραντος,) glory that will never be sullied, or obscured, never be in a declination. This blessed face never grows old; never any wrinkle hath place in it. 'Tis the eternal glory, (in the other part of the notion of eternity,) as it imports an endless duration, neither subject to decay, in itself, nor to injury, or impairment,[x] from without. As stable as the Divine Being; Thy God, thy glory; the Lord thy everlasting light: if that have a true sense with respect to any of the church militant on earth, it must needs have a more full sense, in reference to it triumphing in heaven. As, therefore, full entire glory affords fulness of joy; permanent, everlasting glory affords [y] pleasures for evermore.

4. An appropriate glory, even to them 'tis so; a glory wherein they are really interested. 'Tis the glory of *their* God, and *their* happiness is designed to them from it. They are not unconcerned in it, as 'tis the glory of God. It cannot but be grateful to them to behold the shining glory of their God; whom they feared and served before, while they could have no such sight of him. That glory of his was once under a cloud, concealed from the world, wrapt up in obscurity: it now breaks the cloud, and justifies the fear and reverence of his faithful and loyal servants, against atheistical rebels, that feared him not. 'Tis infinitely pleasing to see him now so glorious, whom they thought to have a glory beyond all their conceptions before; while others would not think so of him, but judged it safe to slight and set him at nought. Subjects share in their prince's glory, children in their father's. But besides that collateral interest, that interest by reflection, they have a more direct interest in this glory. A true and real right,

t 1 Thess. iii. 10.
u 1 Pet. i. 3. 2 Cor. iv. 17. 2 Tim. ii. 10. 1 Pet. v. 10.
x Isa. lx. 14. y Psal. xvi. 11.

upon a manifold title: the Father's gift, Son's purchase, Holy Ghost's obsignation and earnest; the promises' tender; their faith's acceptance; their forerunner's prepossession: yea, 'tis their [z] inheritance; they are children and therefore heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, to the same glory with him. They are by him received to the glory of God, called to his kingdom and glory. Will it not contribute exceedingly to their satisfaction, when they shall look upon this glory, not as unconcerned spectators, but as interested persons? This is my happiness, to behold and enjoy this blessed God! What a rapturous expression is that,[m] God our own God shall bless us; and that, Thy God thy glory! Upon interest in God, follows their interest in his glory and blessedness; which is so much the dearer, and more valuable, as it is theirs: their glory, from their God. They shall be blessed by God, their own God; drink waters out of their own well. How endearing a thing is propriety! Another man's son is ingenious, comely, personable, this may be a matter of envy; but mine own is so, this is a joy. I read in the life of a devout nobleman of France,[n] that receiving a letter from a friend, in which were inserted these words, *Deus meus, et omnia; My God, and my all;* he thus returns back to him, "I know not what your intent was, to put into your letter these words, *Deus meus, et omnia; My God, and my all;* only you invite me thereby to return the same to you, and to all creatures; My God, and my all; my God, and my all; my God, and my all. If perhaps you take this for your motto, and use it to express how full your heart is of it; think you it possible I should be silent upon such an invitation, and not express my sense thereof? Likewise, be it known unto you therefore, that he is my God and my all; and if you doubt of it, I shall speak it a hundred times over. I shall add no more; for any thing else is superfluous, to him that is truly penetrated with my God, and my all. I leave you therefore in this happy state of jubilation; and conjure you, to beg for me, of God, the solid sense of these words." And do we think, My God, and my all, or my God, and my glory, will have lost its emphasis in heaven? or that it will be less significant among awaked souls? These things concur then, concerning the object: 'tis most excellent, (even divine,) entire, permanent, and theirs: how can it but satisfy!

z Rom. viii. 17. ch. xv. 7. 1 Thess. ii. 12.
m Psalm lxvii. 6. n Monsieur de Renti.

CHAPTER VI.

What the vision of God's face contributes to the soul's satisfaction, estimated from the consideration of the act of vision itself. Wherein this pleasure surpasses that of sense. A comparison pursued more at large, between this intuition and discourse, between it and faith. This intuition more absolutely considered: Its characters, and what they contribute to the satisfaction of the blessed soul: That it is, *viz.* efficacious, comprehensive, fixed, appropriative.

2. THE act of vision, or intuition itself. How great the pleasure will be that accrues to the blessed from this sight of God's face, is very much also to be estimated from the[a] nature of the act, as well as the excellency of the object. Inasmuch as every vital act is pleasant, the most perfect act of the noblest faculty of the soul must needs be attended with highest pleasure. 'Tis a pleasure that most nearly intimates divine pleasure. And every thing is more perfect, as it more nearly approaches divine perfections. Intellectual pleasure is as much nobler than that of sense, as an immortal spirit is more noble than a clod of earth. The pleasure of sense is drossy, feculent, the pleasure of the mind refined and pure; that is faint and languid, this lively and vigorous; that, scant and limited, this, ample, and enlarged; that, temporary and fading, this, durable and permanent; that, flashy, superficial, this, solid and intense; that, raving and distracted, this, calm and composed. Whence even that great reputed sensualist, Epicurus himself, professedly disclaims, or is represented as disclaiming, the conceit of placing happiness in sensual delights.

And as the pleasure of intellection excels all the pleasure of sense; so doth the pleasure of intuition excel all other intellectual pleasure. Let us, to this purpose, but consider, generally, this way of knowing things, and compare it with those two other ways, by discourse and by faith.

a Res sunt perfectiores vel imperfectiores prout à summa perfectione magis vel minime abscedunt. Pet. Molin. de cognitione Dei. See Culverwel of the light of nature, speaking (as I remember) to this purpose, c. 17. Quocirca et cum universe voluptatem beatæ vitæ esse finem dicimus; longe profecto abeumus, ut eas voluptates, quæ sunt virorum luxu diffluentium, aut aliorum etiam, quatenus spectantur in ipsa motione, actioneve fruendi; qua nimirum sensus jucunde duloiterque afficitur, intelligamus; veluti quidam rem ignorantes, aut a nobis dissentientes, aut alioquin adversum nos male affecti, interpretantur; sed illud duntaxat (ut res iterum dicatur) intelligimus: non dolere corpore; animo non perturbari. Gassend. Syntag. Philos. Epicur. See his Epistle to Menoceus in D. Laert.

1. Discourse. I mean (that I be not mistaken by the vulgar reader) the discourse of the mind, or ratiocination; that way of attaining the knowledge of things, by comparing one thing with another, considering their mutual relations, connexions, dependencies; and so arguing out, what was more doubtful and obscure, from what was more known and evident. To the altogether unlearned it will hardly be conceivable, and to the learned it need not be told, how high a gratification this employment of his reason naturally yields to the mind of a man; when the harmonious contexture of truths with truths, the apt coincidence, the secret links and junctures of co-herent notions, are clearly discerned: when effects are traced up to their [b] causes, properties lodged in their native subjects, things sifted to their principles. What a pleasure is it, when a man shall apprehend himself regularly led on (though but by a slender thread of discourse) through the labyrinths of nature; when still new discoveries are successfully made, every further inquiry ending in a further prospect, and every new scene of things entertaining the mind with a fresh delight! How many have suffered a voluntary banishment from the world, as if they were wholly strangers, and unrelated to it; rejected the blandishments of sense; macerated themselves with unwearied studies, for this pleasure; making the ease and health of their bodies to give place to the content and satisfaction of their minds! But how much intuition hath the advantage, above this way of knowledge, may be seen in these two obvious respects.

1. 'Tis a more facile way of knowing. [c]Here is no need of a busy search, a tiresome indagation, (the difficulty whereof makes the more slothful rather trust than try,) a chaining together of consequences. The soul hath its clothing (its vestment of light) upon as cheap terms as the lilies theirs; doth neither toil nor spin for it; and yet Solomon, in all the glory of his famed wisdom, was not arrayed like it. This knowledge saves the expense of study; is instantaneous, not successive. The soul now sees more, at one view, in a moment, than before in a life's-time: as a man hath a speedier and more grateful prospect of a pleasant country, by placing himself in some commodious station, that commands the whole region, than by travelling

b Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas.

c Nonnulli tædio investigandæ veritatis, cuilibet opinioni potius ignavi succumbunt; quam in exploranda veritate, pertinaci diligentia perseverare volunt. Min. Felix, Oct. 9.

through it. 'Tis no pains to look upon what offers itself to my eye. Where there is a continued series of consequences, that lie naturally connected, the soul pleasingly observes this continuity; but views the whole frame, the whole length of the line, at once, (so far as its limited capacity can extend,) and needs not discuss every particle, severally, in this series of truths, and proceed *gradatim*, from the knowledge of one truth to another; in which case only one, at once would be present to its view. It sees things that are connected, not because they are so: *As a man, conveniently placed in some eminent station, may possibly see, at one view, all the successive parts of a gliding stream :*[d] *but he that sits by the water's side, not changing his place, sees the same parts, only because they succeed; and these that pass, make way for them that follow, to come under his eye: so doth a learned man describe the unsuccessive knowledge of God;* of which the glorified soul's way of knowing, is an imitation; as the very words seeing and beholding (which it is so frequently set forth by in Scripture) do naturally import. Yet that, as to them, all ratiocination shall be excluded that state, I see no reason to admit; though with God it can have no place. And, as he is reckoned to live a pleasanter life, that spends upon a plentiful estate, than he that gets his bread by the sweat of his brows; so this more easy way of knowing, must needs be reckoned more pleasing. This knowledge is as Jacob's venison, not hunted for but brought to hand. The race is not here to the swift. The unlearned idiot knows as much as the profoundest Rabbi; (at least with as much satisfaction;)[e] and all arms are of an equal size; or are content with their own measure.

2. 'Tis more certain. For what do we use to reckon so certain as what we see with our eyes? Better (even in this respect) is the sight of the eyes, than the wandering of the desire. While here the mind is carried, with most earnest desire, to pursue knowledge, it very often mistakes its way, and miserably wanders. In our most wary ratiocinations, we many times shoot at rovers; but when we know by this vision, our mark is immediately presented to our eye. We are in no danger to be imposed upon by delusive ap-

d Atque ut homini sedenti ad ripam fluminis, sola aqua presens est quæ ei hoc temporis punctulo observatur; eidem vero homini, totum flumen presens esset, si supra summam aeris regionem erectus, uno aspectu fontem et ostium fluminis posset aspicere: Ita oculo Dei, &c. P. Molinæus de cognit. Dei.

e Herbert.

pearances of things. We look through no fallacious mediums, are held in no suspense; puzzled with no doubts, whether such consequences will hold, such conclusions be rightly inferred; and so are not retarded from giving a present unwavering assent. Here are no perplexing intricacies, no dubious hallucinations, or uncertain guesses. We see things, as they are, by a simple and undeceiving light, with both subjective and objective certainty, being secure both from doubt and error.

2. Faith. How magnificent things doth Scripture speak of this grace! which the experience also of such as have been wont to live by it (*i. e.* to make it the governing principle of their lives) doth abundantly confirm. How clear are its apprehensions! [f] 'tis the evidence of things not seen: how sweet its enjoyments! [g] whom not seeing ye love; and though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice, with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Even the heathen theology hath magnified it above knowledge. "What is it (saith one) that unites us with the self-goodness, and so joins us thereto, that it quiets or gives rest to all our action and motion? I will express it in one word; 'tis faith itself, which unspeakably, and after a hidden manner, doth unite and conjoin happy souls with the self-good. For (saith he) it concerns us not, either in the way of science, [h] *or with any imperfection, to inquire after the good; but to behold ourselves in the Divine light, and so shutting our eyes, to be placed in the unknown and secret unity of beings.*" And a later writer gives us this, as a conclusion from that former author, That as faith, which is credulity, [i] is below science; so that faith, which is truly so called, is, super-substantially, above science and intelligence, immediately uniting us to God. But 'tis evident, intuitive knowledge far exceeds even faith also.

1. 'Tis more distinct and clear. Faith is taking a thing upon report; [k] Who hath believed our report? And they are more general, languid apprehensions we have of things this way. Faith enters at the ear; [l] it comes by hearing. And if we compare the perceptions of these two external senses, that of hearing, and sight; the latter is unspeakably more clear, and satisfying. He that hath knowledge of a foreign country, only by report of another, hath very

f Ελεγχος. Heb. xi. 1. g 1 Pet. i. 8.
h Ου γνωστικως, ουδε ατελως, αλλ' επιδοντας, εαυτους τοις θειοις φωτι, &c. Proclus. in Plat. Theol.
i Picus Mirand. k Isa. liii. 1. l Rom. x. 16.

indistinct apprehensions of it, in comparison of him who hath travelled it himself. While the queen of Sheba only heard of Solomon's glory, she could not satisfy herself without an αὐτοψια, the sight of her own eye; and, when she saw it, she saith, the one half was not told her of what she now beheld. The ear more slowly and gradually receives, and the tongue more defectively expresses to another, an account of things; than one's ocular inspection would take it in. But, as to the excellency of this intuitive knowledge above faith; the comparison lies not between knowing by the ministry of a more noble sense, and a less noble; but knowing by dependence on a less noble, and without dependence upon any at all. When God hath been pleased to afford discoveries, in that way of vision, to men in the body, (his prophets, &c.) he hath usually bound up their senses, by sleep or trances; sense hath had no part or lot in this matter; unto believing it must necessarily concur.

2. More effective. What we see, even with our external eye, much more powerfully moves our heart, than what we only give credit to upon hearsay. The queen of Sheba much admired, no doubt, Solomon's famed splendour and magnificence, while she only heard of it; but when she saw it, it put her into an ecstasy; it ravished away her soul; she had no more spirit, &c. What would the sight of the Divine glory do, if God did not strengthen with all might; were there not as well glorious power to support, as powerful glory to transform! Job had heard of God by the hearing of the ear, but when once his eye saw him, (whether that were by the appearance of any sensible glory; which is probable enough, for 'tis said, the Lord answered him out of the whirlwind; or whether by a more immediate revelation, 'tis less material,) what work did it make in his soul! The devils believe, and tremble; so impressive are the pre-apprehensions of judgment to come, and the consequents thereof, with them; yet their present torment, thence, is no torment, in comparison (art thou come to torment us before the time?) of what they expect. Let wicked men consider this; (they will have their intuition in hell too;) were your belief, and terror thereupon, with reference to the eternal judgment, and the impendent wrath of God, equal to what the devils themselves have, upon the same account; actual sensation will make you more exceed yourselves in point of misery, than the devils do now exceed you. There is, no doubt, a proportionable difference between the impressions of present faith, and

future vision, with holy souls. Now, not seeing, yet believing, they rejoice, with joy unspeakable. Their present joy cannot be spoken; their future then cannot be thought! Experience daily tells us, how greatly sensible, present objects have the advantage upon us, beyond those that are spiritual and distant, though infinitely more excellent and important. When the tables are turned, the now sensible things disappear; a new scene of things, invisible and eternal, is immediately presented to our view; when the excellency of the objects, the disposedness of the subjects, the nature of the act, shall all multiply the advantages, on this part. How affective will this vision be, beyond what we have ever found the faint apprehensions of our so much disadvantaged faith to amount to! A kind message from an indulgent father, to his far-distant son, informing of his welfare, and yet continuing love, will much affect; but the sight of his father's face, will even transport, and overcome him with joy.

But further consider this intuition a little more particularly and absolutely in itself. So, you may take this somewhat distincter account of it, in some few particulars, corresponding to those, by which the object (the glory to be beheld) was lately characterized.—1. It will be a *vigorous, efficacious* intuition; as that which it beholds is the most excellent; even the *Divine* glory. Such an object cannot be beheld, but with an eye full of lively vigour; a sparkling, a radiant eye: a weak eye would be struck blind, would fail, and be closed up at the first glance. We must suppose, then, this vision to be accompanied with the highest vitality, the strongest energy, a mighty plenitude of spirit and power, no less than the Divine: nothing but the Divine power can sufficiently fortify the soul to behold Divine glory. When the apostle speaks only of his desire of glory, He that hath wrought us to this self-same thing (saith he) is God, he that hath moulded us, suitably framed us (as the word signifieth) for this thing, is God: 'tis the work of a Deity to make a soul desire glory: certainly, then, 'tis his work to give the power of beholding it. And by how much the more of power, so much the more of pleasure in this vision. Weak sight would afford but languid joy: but when the whole soul, animated with divine power and life, shall seat itself in the eye; when it shall be, as it were, all eye, (as one said of God, whom now it perfectly imitates,) and be wholly intent upon vision; ap-

ply itself thereto with all its might, as its only business;[m] what satisfying joys doth it now taste! renewed by every repeated view! how doth it now, as it were, prey upon glory; as the eye of the eagle upon the beams of the sun! We meet with the expression of *aures bibulæ*; here will be *oculi bibuli, thirsty eyes*; a soul ready to drink in glory at the eye. If vision be by intromission, what attractive eyes are here, drawing in glory, feeding upon glory! If by extramission, what piercing, darting eyes, sending forth the soul at every look to embrace the glorious object!

There is a great power that now attends realizing thoughts of God: whether it appear in the consequent working of the soul directly towards God; or by way of reflection upon itself. If directly towards God; how mightily is he admired! "Who is a God like unto thee?" If by reflection upon our own sin, and vileness; how deeply doth it humble!—"Now mine eye seeth thee, therefore I abhor myself.—Wo is me, I am undone,—mine eyes have seen the Lord of glory." If by way of reflection, upon our interest in him, or relation to him; how mightily doth it support and comfort![n] "I will look to the Lord,—my God will hear me." How full of rich sense is that scripture,[o] They looked to him and were lightened! One look clothed them with light, cast a glory upon their souls, filled them with life and joy; 'twas but a thought, the cast of an eye, and they were as full as hearts could hold. O the power then of these heavenly visions, when we dwell in the views of that transforming glory!—2. This will be a *comprehensive* intuition; as its object is *entire* glory. I mean comparatively, not absolutely comprehensive. More of the Divine glory will be comprehended, unspeakably, than before. 'Tis called, we know, by the schoolmen, the knowledge of *comprehensors*, in contradiction to that of *viators*. We shall better be able to discern the Divine excellencies together; have much more adequate conceptions; a fuller, and more complete notion of God: we shall see him as he is. 'Tis too much observable, how in our present state, we are prejudiced by our partial conceptions of him; and what an inequality they cause in the temper of our spirits. For wicked men, the very notion they have of God proves fatal to their souls, or is of a most destructive tendency; because they comprehend not together what

m S. Hieronym.
n Mic. vii. 7.
o Psal. xxxiv. 5.

God hath revealed of himself. Most usually, they confine those few thoughts of God they have, only to his mercy; and that exclusively, as to his holiness and justice; hence their vain and mad presumption. The notion of an unholy (or a not-holy, and not-just) God, what wickedness would it not induce! "Thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thyself:" a God after their own hearts; then the reins are let loose. More rarely, when the conscience of guilt hath arrested the self-condemned wretch, God is thought of under no other notion, than of an irreconcilable enemy and avenger; as one thirsting after the blood of souls, and that will admit of no atonement. So without all pretence, and so flatly contrary to all his discoveries of himself, do men dare to affix to him black and horrid characters, forged only out of the radicated and inveterate hatred of their own hearts against him, (that never take up good thoughts of any one,) only because they have no mind to acquaint themselves with him; and that they may have some colour for their affected distance; and so, perhaps, never return; but perish under a horrid wilful despair. And even the people of God themselves are too apt sometimes, so wholly to fix their eye upon love and grace, that they grow into an unbecoming, uncreaturely familiarity; while the thoughts of infinite majesty, adorable greatness and glory, are asleep: sometimes, possibly, they apprehend vindictive justice, the indignation and jealousy of God against sin, (precluding meanwhile the consideration of his indulgent compassions towards truly humble and penitent souls,) to that degree of affrightment and dread, that they grow into an unchildlike strangeness towards him, and take little pleasure in drawing nigh to him. But when, *now*, our eye shall take in the discovery of Divine glory equally, how sweet and satisfying a pleasure will arise from that grateful mixture of reverent love, humble joy, modest confidence, meek courage, a prostrate magnanimity, a triumphant veneration; a soul shrinking before the Divine glory into nothing, yet not contenting itself with any less enjoyment, than of him, who is all in all!

There is nothing here in this complexion, or temper of soul, but hath its warrant, in the various aspect of the face of God comprehensively beheld; nothing but what is (even by its suitableness) highly grateful and pleasing.—3. 'Twill be *fixed*, *steady* intuition, as its object is *permanent* glory. The vision of God can neither infer, nor admit weariness. The eye cannot divert; its act is eternally delectable, and

affords an unvariable, undecaying pleasure. Sensual delights soon end in loathing; quickly bring a glutting surfeit; and degenerate into torments,[p] when they are continued and unintermittent. A philosopher,[q] in an epistle which he writes to a friend, from the court of Dionysius, where he was forcibly detained, thus bemoans himself, "*We are unhappy, O Antisthenes, beyond measure! and how can we but be unhappy, that are burdened by the tyrant every day with sumptuous feasts, plentiful compotations, precious ointments, gorgeous apparel? and I knew as soon as I came into this island and city, how unhappy my life would be.*" This is the nature and common condition of even the most pleasing sensible objects: they first tempt, then please a little, then disappoint, and lastly vex. The eye that beholds them, blasts them quickly, rifles and deflowers their glory; and views them with no more delight at first, than disdain afterwards. Creature-enjoyments have a bottom, are soon drained and drawn dry: hence there must be frequent diversions; other pleasures must be sought out; and are chosen, not because they are better, but because they are new.

This demonstrates the emptiness and vanity of the creature. Affection of variety only proceeds from sense of want; and is a confession, upon trial, that there is not in such an enjoyment what was expected. Proportionably, in the state of glory, a constant indeficient fulness, renders the blessed soul undesirous of any change. There is no need of varieties, or diversions: what did once please, can never cease to do so. This glory cannot fade, or lose any thing of its attractive power. The faculty cannot languish, or lose the disposition, by which it is contempered and made proportionable thereto. Hence no weariness can ensue. What! a soul in which the love of God is perfected, grow weary of beholding him! The sun will sooner grow weary of shining; the touched needle of turning itself to its wonted point; every thing will sooner grow weary of its centre; and the most fundamental laws of nature be sooner antiquated and made void for ever. The eye of the fool, Solomon tells us,[r] is in the ends of the earth. His, only, is a rolling wandering eye, that knows not where to fix. Wisdom guides, and fixes the eye of the holy soul;

p Proba istas, quæ voluptates vocantur, ubi modum transcenderint, pœnas esse. Sen. Ep. 83.

q Κακοδαιμονουμεν, ω Αντισθενες, ου μετριως, &c. Socraticorum. Epist. 8.

r Prov. xvii. 24.

determines it unto God only :[s] I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel, my reins also instruct me,—I have set the Lord always before me. Surely heaven will not render it less capable of dijudication; of passing a right judgment of the excellency and worth of things. And here, a rational judgment will find no want; and an irrational will find no place. Therefore, as permanent glory will certainly infer a perpetual vision; perpetuated vision will as certainly perpetuate the soul's satisfaction and blessedness.—4. 'Twill be a *possessive* intuition: as 'tis an *appropriate* glory which it pitches upon. 'Twill be the language of every look, "This glory is mine." The soul looks not upon it shyly, as if it had nothing to do with it; or with slight and careless glances: but the very posture of its eye speaks its interest, and proclaims the pretensions it hath to this glory. With how different an aspect doth a stranger passing by, and the owner, look upon the same house, the same lands! A man's eye lays his claim for him and avows his right. A grateful object that one can say is his own, he arrests it with his eye; so do saints with appropriative looks behold their God, and the Divine glory. Even with such an eye as he was wont to behold them;[t] To this man will I look, &c. that is, as the place of my rest, mentioned before; he designs him with his eye. Which is the import of that expression,[u] The Lord knows who are his; his eye marks them out; owns them as his own: as concerning others, whom he disowns, the phrase is, I know you not. And how vastly different is such an intuition, from that, when I look upon a thing with a hungry, lingering eye, which I must never enjoy, or never expect to be the better for! This vision is fruitive, unites the soul with the blessed object: which kind of sight is meant, when actual blessedness is so often expressed by seeing God. We see then what vision, the sight of God's face, contributes to the satisfaction of blessed souls.

s Psal. xvi. 7, 8.
t Isa. lxvi. 1, 2.
u 2 Tim. ii. 19.

CHAPTER VII.

Wherein assimilation (the likeness or glory of God impressed) contributes unto satisfaction: where is particularly propounded to be shown, What pleasure it involves, what it disposes to: What it involves in the *esse* of it, what in the *cognosci*. 1. The pleasure of being like God discovered. 1. Showing concerning the image of God (generally considered) that it is the soul's health and soundness restored; that it is a vital, an intimate, a connatural, a perfect image.

2. Our next business is to discover, what assimilation, or the impressed likeness of God, may further add to this satisfied state; or, what satisfying pleasure the blessed soul finds in this, that it is like God. And here we are distinctly to inquire into—the pleasure which such an assimilation to God involves in itself, and—that which it tends and disposes to.

1. The pleasure it involves in itself; or, which is taken in it abstractedly considered; which we may more particularly unfold by showing—the pleasure involved, 1. in being like God: and—2. in knowing or reflecting upon the same: the *esse* and the *cognosci* of this assimilation.

1. The pleasure in being like God; which may be discovered both by a general consideration hereof, and by instancing in some particulars, wherein blessed souls shall be like him.

1. It is obvious to suppose an inexpressible pleasure in the very feeling, the inward sensation, the holy soul will have of that happy frame in *general*, whereinto it is now brought; that joyful harmony, that entire rectitude, it finds within itself. You may as soon separate light from a sunbeam, as pleasure from such a state. This likeness or conformity to God is an εὐκρασια, a perfect temperament; an athletic healthiness; a strong sound constitution of soul. Do but imagine, what it is to a man's body, after a wasting sickness, to find himself well. Frame a notion of the pleasure of health and soundness, when both all the parts and members of the body are in their proper places and proportions, and a lively, active vigour, a sprightly strength, possesses every part, and actuates the whole; how pleasant is this temper! If we were all body, there could be no greater felicity than this. But by how much the

more noble any creature is, so is it capable of more exquisite pains, or pleasures. [a]Sin is the sickness and disease of the soul; enfeebles all its powers, exhausts its vigour, wastes its strength. You know the restless tossings, the weary roslings to and fro, of a diseased languishing body; such is the case of a sinful soul. Let it but seriously bethink itself, and then speak its own sense; (but here is the malignity of the disease, it cannot be serious, it always raves;) What will it be? "O I can take no rest!" The way of wickedness is called [b]a way of pain: sinners would find it so, if the violence of the disease had not bereft them of sense: Nothing savours with me; I can take comfort in nothing. The wicked are as a troubled sea (as their name imports) that cannot rest, whose waters, &c. The image of God, renewed in holiness and righteousness, is health restored, after such a consuming sickness; which when we awake, when all the drowsiness that attends our disease is shaken off, we find to be perfect. The fear of the Lord, (an ordinary paraphrase of holiness or piety,) is said to be health to the navel and marrow to the bones. Our Lord Jesus invites[c] wearied sinners to come to him, to take his yoke on them, to learn of him, that is, to imitate him, to be like him; and promises they shall find rest to their souls. How often do we find grace and peace in conjunction in the apostles' salutations and benedictions! We are told that the ways of Divine wisdom (*i. e.* which it prescribeth) are all[d] pleasantness and peace. That in keeping the commandments of God there is great reward. That they are not grievous, *i. e.* (for there seems to be a *meiosis* in the expression,) are joyous, pleasant. And what are his commandments, but those expresses of himself, wherein we are to be like him, and conform to his will? [e]The kingdom of God (that holy order which he settles in the spirits of men, his law transcribed and impressed upon the soul; which is nothing else but its conformation and likeness to himself:) is righteousness, and then peace. The *φρόνημα* Πνέυματος,[f]

a Τιμιωτερον ψυχη σωματος, το δε τιμιωτερον αγαθον μειζον, το δε των μειζονι, αγαθωι εναντιον, μειζον κακον αγαθον δε μειζον υγεια ψυχης υγειας σωματος, μειζον ουν κακον νοσος ψυχης, νοσου σωματος, νοσος ψυχης μοχθηρια, &c. Max. Tyr. dissert. 41.

b עֹצֶב רֵרֵך Psal. cxxxix. 24. רשׁע Isa. lvii. 20. Hinc illud et tædium et displicentia sui, et nusquam residentis animi volutatio, &c. Sen. de Tranqu. animi.

c Mat. xi. 28.

d Prov. iii. 13. Psal. xix. 1 John v. 3.

e Rom. xiv. 17. f Rom. viii. 6.

that *notion*, and *judgment*, and *savour* of things, that excellent temper of mind and heart, (for that is the extent of the expression,) whereof the Holy Spirit of God is both the author and pattern, is life and peace, involves them in itself. When one thing is thus, in *casu recto*, predicated of another, it speaks their most intimate connexion, as Rom. xiv. 17. above: so 1 John v. 3. This is love that, &c. So here, such a mind is life and peace (though the copula be not in the original, it is fitly supplied in the translation.) You cannot separate (*q. d.*) life and peace from such a mind: it hath no principle of death or trouble in it. Let such as know any thing of this blessed temper and complexion of soul, compare this scripture and their own experience together; when at any time they find their souls under the blessed empire and dominion of a spiritual mind, when spirituality wholly rules and denominates them. Are not their souls the very region of life and peace? both these in conjunction, life and peace? not raging life, not stupid peace; but a placid, peaceful life, a vital, vigorous rest and peace: 'tis not the life of a fury, nor peace of a stone: life that hath peace in it, and peace that hath life in it. Now can the soul say, "I feel myself well; all is now well with me."[g] Nothing afflicts the spiritual mind so far, and while 'tis such; 'tis wrapt up and clothed in its own innocency and purity, and hereby become invulnerable, not liable to hurtful impressions. Holiness (under the name of light, for that is by the context the evident meaning of the word there) is by the apostle spoken of as the Christian's armour. Put on, saith he, the armour of light, in opposition to the works of darkness, which he had mentioned immediately before. Strange armour! that a man may see through. A good man's armour is, that he needs none: his armour is an open breast; that he can expose himself, is fearless of any harm. Who is he that shall harm you if ye be followers of that which is good? It should be read imitators, so the word signifies; and so whereas following is either of a pattern or an end, the former must be meant here, by the natural importance of that word. And hence, by[k] "that which is good," is not to be understood created goodness; for it is not enough to imi-

g Invulnerabile est non quod non feritur, sed quod non læditur. Sen. de constantia sapientis, sive quod in sapientem non cadit injuria.
h Rom. xiii. 12.
i Integer vitæ scelerisque purus, &c. Hor. Μιμηται. k Του αγαθου.

tate that goodness, for so we must be good; but the words are capable of being read, him that is good, or (which is all one) the good.[l] And so 'tis the increate good, the blessed God himself, formally considered under the notion of good. Nothing can harm you if you be like God, that's the plain sense of this scripture. Likeness to God is armour of proof; *i. e.* an imitation of him, *viz.* in his moral goodness, which holiness (as a general name of it) comprehends. A person truly like God is secure from any external violence, so far as that it shall never be able to invade his spirit. He is in spirit far raised above the tempestuous stormy region, and converses where winds and clouds have no place.

Nor can, so far as this temper of soul prevails, any evil grow upon such a mind within itself. It is life and peace, it is light and purity, for 'tis the image, the similitude of God.[m] God is light, and with him is no darkness at all. Holy souls were darkness, but they are light in the Lord. He the Father of light,[n] they the children of light. They were darkness: not in the dark; but in the abstract, "darkness;" as if that were their whole nature, and they nothing else but an impure mass of conglobated darkness.[o] So, Ye are light: as if they were that and nothing else; nothing but a sphere of light. Why suppose we such a thing as an entire sphere of nothing else but pure light? What can work any disturbance here, or raise a storm within it: A calm, serene thing, perfectly homogeneous, void of contrariety, or any self-repugnant quality: how can it disquiet itself? We cannot yet say, that thus it is with holy souls in their present state, according to the highest literal import of these words, Ye are light: but thus it will be when they awake; when they are satisfied with this likeness. They shall then be like God fully, and throughout. O the joy and pleasure of a soul made after such a similitude! Now glory is become as it were their being, they are glorified. Glory is revealed into them, transfused throughout them. Every thing that is conceivable under the notion of an excellency, competent to created nature, is now to be found with them; and they have it in-wrought into their very beings. So that in a true sense it may be said,

l As Plato and his followers used the expression, *ταγαθον*, fully according to the sense of Matt. xix. 17.

m 1 John i. n Eph. v. James i.

o Σφαιρα ψυχης αυτοειδης, οταν μητε εκτεινηται επι τι, μητε εσω συντρεχη, μητε συνιζανη αλλα φωτι γαμπηται, &c. Marc. Antonin. lib. II.

that they are light; they not only have such excellencies, but they are them:[p] as the moralist saith of the wise or virtuous man, *that he not so properly hath all things, as is all things.* 'Tis said of man, in respect of his naturals, he is the image[q] and glory of God. As for his supernatural excellencies, though they are not essential to man, they are more expressive of God; and are now become so inseparable from the nature of man too, in this his glorified state, that he can as soon cease to be intelligent as holy. The image of God, even in this respect, is not separable from him, nor blessedness, (surely,) from this image. As the divine excellencies, being in their infinite fulness in God, are his own blessedness, so is the likeness, the participation of them in the soul that now bears this image its blessedness. Nothing can be necessary to its full satisfaction which it hath not in itself, by a gracious vouchsafement and communication. The good man, (in that degree which his present state admits of,) Solomon tells us,[r] is satisfied from himself: he doth not need to traverse the world, to seek his happiness abroad; he hath the matter of satisfaction, even that goodness which he is now enriched with, in his own breast and bosom;[s] yet he hath it all by participation from the fountain-goodness. But that participated goodness is so intimately one with him, as sufficiently warrants and makes good the assertion, he is satisfied from himself: *viz.* from himself, not primarily, or independently; but by derivation from him who is all in all, and more intimate to us than we ourselves. And what is that participated goodness, but a degree of the Divine likeness? But when that goodness shall be fully participated, when this image and imitation of the Divine goodness shall be complete and entire, then shall we know the rich exuberant sense of those words. How fully will this image or likeness satisfy then! And yet more distinctly, we may apprehend how satisfying this likeness or image impressed will be, if, a little further deferring the view of the particulars of this likeness which we have designed to instance in, we consider these general properties of it.

1. 'Tis a vital image: not the image only of him that lives, the living God; but it is his living and soul-quickening image. 'Tis the likeness of him, in that very res-

p Omnia non tam habere quam esse. Sen.
q 1 Cor. xi. 7. r Prov. xiv. 14.
s Intimo nostro intimior. Esse nostrum laudabile. Gibieuf. de libertate, ex. Plat. et Aug.

pect; an imitation and participation of the life of God; by which, once revived, the soul lives that was dead before. 'Tis not a dead picture, a dumb show, an unmoving statue; but a living, speaking, walking image; that wherewith the child is like the father: the very life of the subject where it is; and by which it lives as God, speaks and acts conformably to him. An image, not such a one as is drawn with a pencil, that expresses only colour and figure; but such a one as is seen in a glass,[t] that represents life and motion, as was noted from a worthy author before. 'Tis even, in its first and more imperfect draught, an analogical participation (as we must understand it) of the[u] Divine nature; before which first tincture, those preludious touches of it upon the spirit of man, his former state is spoken of as[x] an alienation from the life of God; as having no interest, no communion therein. The[y] putting on of the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, is presently mentioned, in direct opposition to that dismal state, implying that to be a participation of the Divine life: and certainly, so far as it is so, 'tis a participation of the Divine blessedness too.

2. 'Tis an image most intimate, therefore, to its subject. Glory it is; but not a superficial skin-deep glory; such as shone in Moses's face, which he covered with a vail. 'Tis thoroughly transformative; changes the soul throughout; not in external appearance, but in its very nature. All outward embellishments would add little felicity to a putrid, corrupt soul. That would be but painting a sepulchre; this adds ornament unto life; and both, especially to the inward man. 'Tis not paint in the face, while death is at the heart; but 'tis the radication of such a principle within as will soon form and attemper the man universally to itself. 'Tis glory, blessedness, participated, brought home and lodged in a man's own soul, in his own bosom; he cannot then but be satisfied. A man may have a rich stock of outward comforts, and while he hath no heart to enjoy them, be never the happier. But 'tis impossible, that happiness should be thus lodged in his soul, made so intimate, and one with him; and yet, that he should not be satisfied, not be happy.

3. An image connatural to the spirit of man. Not a thing alien, and foreign to his nature, put into him pur-

t Sic oculos, sic ille manus, sic ora ferebat.
u 2 Pet. i. x Eph. iv. 18. y Ver. 23, 24.

posely, as it were, to torment and vex him; but an ancient well-known inhabitant, that had place in him from the beginning. Sin is the injurious intruder; which therefore puts the soul into a commotion, and permits it not to rest, while it hath any being there. This image calms it, restores it, works a peaceful, orderly composure within; returns it to itself, to its pristine, blessed state; being reseated there, as in its proper, primitive subject. For though this image, in respect of corrupted nature, be supernatural; in respect of institute, and undefiled nature, it was in a true sense natural, as hath been demonstrated by divers of ours against the papists; and upon the matter, yielded by some of the more moderate among themselves.[x] At least it was connate with human nature, consentaneous to it, and perfective of it. We are speaking, it must be remembered, of that part of the Divine image that consists in moral excellencies; there being another part of it, as hath been said, that is, even in the strictest sense natural. There is nothing in the whole moral law of God, (in conformity whereunto this image did; *ab origine*, consist,) nothing of what he requires from man, that is at all destructive of his being, prejudicial to his comforts, repugnant to his most innate principles: nothing that clashes with his reason, or is contrary to his interest; or that is not, most directly conservative of his being and comforts, agreeable to his most rational principles, subservient to his best and truest interest, for what[a] doth God the Lord require, but fear and love, service, and holy walking from an entire and undivided soul? what, but what is good; not only in itself, but for us; and in respect whereof, his law is said to be[b] holy, just and good? And what he requireth, he impresseth. This law, written in the heart, is this likeness. How grateful, then, will it be, when, after a long extermination and exile, it returns and re-possesses the soul, is recognized by it, becomes to it a new nature, (yea, even a divine,)[c] a vital, living law, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus! What grievance, or burden, is it to do the dictates of nature? actions that easily and freely flow from their own principles? and, when blessedness itself is infolded in those very acts and inclinations? How infinitely satisfying and delightful will it be, when the soul

x As may be seen by comparing what Estius says to the two questions, 1. An gratia fuerit primo homini naturalis? 2. Utrum originalis justitia fuerit homini supernaturalis? l. 2. dist. 25.

a Deut. x. 12. Mic. vi. 8. b Rom. vii. 12. c Rom. viii. 2.

shall find itself connaturalized to every thing in its duty; and shall have no other duty incumbent on it than to be happy! when it shall need no arguments and exhortations to love God: nor need be urged and pressed, as heretofore, to mind him, to fear before him! when love, and reverence, and adoration, and praise; when delight, and joy, shall be all natural acts! Can you separate this, in your own thoughts, from the highest satisfaction?

4. This image will be now perfect; every way, fully perfect.—1. In *all its parts*, as it is in the first instant of the soul's entrance into the state of regeneration; the womb of grace knows no defective maimed births. And yet here is no little advantage, as to this kind of perfection. For now those lively lineaments of the new creature all appear, which were much obscured before: every line of glory is conspicuous, every character legible, the whole entire frame of this image is, in its exact symmetry and apt proportions, visible at once. And 'tis an unspeakable addition to the pleasure of so excellent a temper of spirit, that accrues from the discernible entireness of it. Heretofore, some gracious dispositions have been to seek, (through the present prevalence of some corruption or temptation,) when there was most need and occasion for their being reduced into act. Hence the reward and pleasure of the act, and improvement of the principle were lost together. Now, the soul will be equally disposed to every holy exercise that shall be suitable to its state. Its temper shall be even and symmetral; its motions uniform and agreeable: nothing done out of season; nothing seasonable omitted, for want of a present disposition of spirit thereto. There will be not only an habitual, but actual entireness of the frame of holiness in the blessed soul.—2. Again this image will be *perfect in degree;* so as to exclude all degrees of its contrary, and to include all degrees of itself. There will be now no longer any colluctation with contrary principles; no law in the members warring against the law of the mind; no lustings of the flesh against the spirit. That war is now ended in a glorious victory, and eternal peace. There will be no remaining blindness of mind, nor error of judgment, nor perverseness of will, nor irregularity or rebellion of affections: no ignorance of God, no aversation from him, or disaffection towards him. This likeness removes all culpable dissimilitude or unlikeness. This communicated glory fills up the whole soul,

causes all clouds and darkness to vanish, leaves no place for any thing that is vile or inglorious; 'tis pure glory, free from mixture of any thing that is alien to it. And it is itself full. The soul is replenished, not with airy, evanid shadows; but with substantial, solid glory,[d] a massive, weighty glory; for I know not but subjective glory may be taken in within the significancy of that known scripture, if it be not more principally intended; inasmuch as the text speaks of a glory to be wrought out by afflictions, which are the files and furnaces, as it were, to polish or refine the soul into a glorious frame. 'Tis cumulated glory, glory added to glory. Here 'tis growing, progressive glory,[e] we are changed into the same image from glory to glory. It shall, now, be stable, consistent glory; that carries a selffulness with it: (which some include also in the notion of purity:)[f] 'tis full itself, includes every degree requisite to its own perfection. God hath now put the last hand to this glorious image, added to it its ultimate accomplishments. Now a conformity to Christ, even in the resurrection from the dead, in his glorious state, is fully attained. That prize of the high calling of God is now won. And the humble sense of not having attained as yet, and of not being already perfect, (in which humility the foundation of the temple of God in a saint is laid, and the building raised,) is turned into joyful acclamations, "Grace, grace!" for the laying on of the top stone, the finishing of this glorious work. And when this temple is filled with the glory of the Lord, the soul itself replenished with the divine fulness, will not its joys be full too? For here is no sacrifice to be offered but that of praise, and joy is the proper seasoning for that sacrifice.

Now, the new creature hath arrived to the measure of the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus. The first formation of this spiritual, as well as of the natural man, was hidden and secret, it was curiously wrought, and in a way no more liable to observation, than that of framing the child in the womb; as that is as hidden as the concoction of minerals, or precious stones, in the lower parts of the earth. No secrets of nature can outvie the mysteries of godliness. Its growth is also by very insensible degrees, as it is with the products of nature: but its arrival to perfection is infinitely more strange than any thing in

d 2 Cor. iv. 17. e 2 Cor. iii. 18.
f Purum est quod est plenum sui, et quod minimum habet alieni.

nature ever was. How sudden and wonderful is the change, when, in the twinkling of an eye, the blessed soul instantly awakes out of drowsy languishings, and miserable weakness, into perfect strength and vigour! As a man is, so is his strength; and as his strength is, so is his joy and pleasure. The sun is said to go forth as a strong man, rejoicing to run his race. When a man goes, in the fulness of his strength, upon any enterprise, how doth his blood and spirits triumph before-hand! No motion of hand or foot, is without a sensible delight. The strength of a man's spirit, is, unspeakably, more than that of the outward man; its faculties and powers more refined and raised; and hence are rational or intellectual exercises and operations much more delightful than corporeal ones can be. But (still as the man is, so is his strength) 'tis an incomparably greater strength that attends the heaven-born man. This man born of God, begotten of God, after his own likeness; this hero, this son of God, was born to conflicts, to victories, to triumphs. While he is yet but in his growing age, he overcomes the world; (as Hercules the serpents in his cradle;) overcomes the wicked one, and is at last more than conqueror. A mighty power attends godliness; "a spirit of power, and of a sound mind; but how much this divine creature grows, so much the more like God: and being perfect, conflicts cease: he had overcome and won the crown before. And now all his strength runs out into acts of pleasure. Now when he shall go forth in his might to love God, (as we are required to love him now with all our might, and every act of praise shall be an act of power, done with a fulness of strength, (as 'tis said their praises, at the bringing home of the ark, were with all their might,) O! what will the pleasure be that shall accompany this state of perfection! Perfect power and perfect pleasure are here met, and shall for ever dwell together, and be always commensurate to one another. They are so here, in their imperfect state: our feeble, spiritless duties, weak, dead prayers; they have no more sweetness than strength, no more pleasure than power in them. Therefore we are listless, and have no mind to duties, as we find we are more frequently destitute of a spiritual liveliness and vigour therein. When a spirit of might and power goes on with us in the wonted course of our converses with God, we then forecast oppor-

g Psal. xix.

tunities, and gladly welcome the season, when it extraordinarily occurs, of drawing nigh to him. It cannot be thought, that the connexion and proportion between these should fail in glory; or that, when every thing else is perfect, the blessed soul itself made perfect, even as God himself is perfect, in this bearing his likeness, should be unlike him in bliss; or its satisfaction be imperfect.

CHAPTER VIII.

The satisfaction carried in the glory of God impressed, further shown by instances. Certain particulars of this; impression instanced in a dependent frame of spirit, subjection or self devoting, love, purity, liberty, tranquillity.

But besides the general consideration of this likeness, we shall instance in some of the particular excellencies comprehended in it, wherein the blessed shall imitate and resemble God: whence we may farther estimate the pleasure and satisfaction that being like God will afford.—Only here let it be remembered, that as we all along in this discourse, speak of likeness to God in respect of moral excellencies; so by likeness to him, in respect of these, we understand, not only a participation of those which are communicable; but a correspondent impress also as to those that are incommunicable; as hath been more distinctly opened in the propositions concerning this likeness. Which being premised, I shall give instances of both kinds, to discover somewhat of the inexpressible pleasure of being thus conformed to God. And here, pretermitting the impress of knowledge of which we have spoken under the former head of vision, we shall instance,

1. In a dependent frame of spirit, which is the proper impress of the Divine all-sufficiency and self-fulness, duly apprehended by the blessed soul. It is not easy to conceive a higher pleasure than this, compatible to a creature,—the pleasure of dependance; yea, this is a higher than we can conceive. Dependance (which speaks the creature's σχέσις or habitude to its principle, as the subserviency which imports its habitude to its end) is two-fold.—1. Natural: which is common and essential to all creatures; even when no such thing is thought on, or considered by them. The

creatures live, move, and have their beings in God, whether they think of it or no.—2. Voluntary, or rational: which is *de facto*, peculiar; and *de jure*, common to reasonable creatures as such. A dependance that is, ἐκ προαιρέσεως, *elective*; and, with a foregoing reason, (which I understand by elective, not a liberty of doing, or not doing it,) and concomitant consideration of what we do, and animadversion of our own act: when knowingly and willingly, understanding ourselves in what we do, we go out of ourselves, and live in God. This is the dependance of which I speak. And it cannot but be attended with transcendant pleasure in that other state, when that knowledge and animadversion shall be clear and perfect: both, as this dependance imports—a nullifying of self—and magnifying (I may call it omnifying) of God, a making him all in all.—As it imports (which it doth most evidently) a *self-annihilation*, a *pure nullifying of self*, 'tis a continual recognition of my own nothingness, a momently, iterated confession, that my whole being is nothing, but a mere puff of precarious breath, a bubble raised from nothing, by the arbitrary fiat of the great Creator; reducible, had he so pleased, any moment to nothing again. These are true and just acknowledgments, and to a well-tempered soul infinitely pleasant, when the state of the case is thoroughly understood, (as now it is,) and it hath the apprehension clear; how the creation is sustained, how, and upon what terms, its own being, life and blessedness are continued to it; that it is every moment, determinable upon the constancy of the creator's will, that it is not simply nothing. 'Tis not possible that any thing should hinder this consideration from being eternally delightful, but that diabolical uncreaturely pride, that is long since banished heaven, and that banished its very subjects thence also. Nothing can suit that temper, but to be a god; to be wholly independent, to be its own sufficiency. The thoughts of living at the will and pleasure of another, are grating; but they are only grating to a proud heart, which here, hath no place. A soul naturalized to humiliations, accustomed to prostrations and self-abasements, trained up in acts of mortification, and that was brought to glory through a continued course and series of self-denial; that ever since it first came to know itself, was wont to depend for every moment's breath, for every glimpse of light, for every

fresh influence, ([a]I live, yet not I—) with what pleasure doth it, now, as it were, vanish before the Lord! what delight doth it take to diminish itself, and as it were, disappear; to contract and shrivel up itself, to shrink even into a point, into a nothing, in the presence of the Divine glory; that it may be all in all! Things are now pleasant, (to the soul, in its right mind) as they are suitable; as they carry a comeliness and congruity in them; and nothing now appears more becoming, than such a self-annihilation. The distances of Creator and creature, of infinite and finite, of a necessary and arbitrary being, of a self-originated and a derived being, of what was from everlasting, and what had a beginning; are now better understood than ever. And the soul, by how much it is now come nearer to God, is more apprehensive of its distance. And such a frame and posture doth, hence, please it best, and doth most fitly correspond thereto. Nothing is so pleasing to it, as to be as it ought. That temper is most grateful that is most proper, and which best agreed with its state. Dependance therefore is greatly pleasing, as it is a self-nullifying thing. And yet it is, in this respect, pleasing, but as a means to a further end. The pleasure that attends it, is higher and more intense, according as it more immediately attains that end, *viz.* the magnifying and exalting of God: which is the most connatural thing to the holy soul; the most fundamental and deeply impressed law of the new creature. Self gives place, that God may take it: becomes nothing, that he may be all: it vanishes, that his glory may shine the brighter.—Dependance gives God his proper glory. 'Tis the peculiar honour and prerogative of a Deity, to have a world of creatures hanging upon it, staying themselves upon it; to be the fulcrum, the centre of a lapsing creation. When this dependance is voluntary and intelligent, it carries in it a more explicit owning and acknowledgment of God. By how much more this is the distinct and actual sense of my soul, Lord, I cannot live but by thee; so much the more openly and plainly do I speak it out, Lord, thou art God alone; thou art the fulness of life and being; the only root and spring of life; the everlasting I AM; the Being of beings.

How unspeakably pleasant, to a holy soul, will such a perpetual agnition or acknowledgment of God be! when

[a] Gal. ii. 20.

the perpetuation of its being shall be nothing else than a perpetuation of this acknowledgment; when every renewed aspiration, every motion, every pulse of the glorified soul, shall be but a repetition of it; when it shall find, itself, in the eternity of life, that everlasting state of life which it now possesses, to be nothing else than an everlasting testimony that God is God: He is so, for, I am, I live, I act, I have the power to love him; none of which could otherwise be. When amongst the innumerable myriads of the heavenly host, this shall be the mutual, alternate testimony of each to all the rest throughout eternity, will not this be pleasant? when each shall feel continually the fresh illapses and incomes of God, the power and sweetness of Divine influences, the enlivening vigour of that vital breath, and find in themselves, thus we live and are sustained: and are yet as secure, touching the continuance of this state of life, as if every one were a god to himself; and did each one possess an entire godhead. When their sensible dependance on him, in their glorified state, shall be a perpetual triumph over all the imaginary deities, the fancied *Numina*, wherewith he was heretofore provoked to jealousy; and he shall now have no rival left, but be acknowledged and known, to be all in all. How pleasant will it then be, as it were, to lose themselves in him! and to be swallowed up in the overcoming sense of his boundless, all-sufficient, every-where flowing fulness! And then add to this; they do by this dependance actually make this fulness of God their own. They are now met in one common principle of life and blessedness, that is sufficient for them all. They no longer live a life of care, are perpetually exempt from solicitous thoughts, which here they could not perfectly attain to in their earthly state. They have nothing to do but to depend; to live upon a present self-sufficient good, which alone is enough to replenish all desires; else it were not self-sufficient. [b]How can we divide, in our most abstractive thoughts, the highest pleasure, the fullest satisfaction, from this dependance? 'Tis to live at the rate of a God; a God-like life: a living upon immense fulness, as he lives.

2. Subjection; which I place next to dependance, as being of the same allay; the product of impressed sovereignty; as the other, of all-sufficient fulness. Both impressions upon the creature, corresponding to somewhat in

b Τὸ δὲ αυταρκες τιθεμεν, ο μονουμενον αιρετον ποιει τον βιον, και μηδος νος ενδεαι. Arist. de mor. lib. 1. c. 4.

God, most incommunicably appropriate to him. This is the soul's real and practical acknowledgment of the supreme Majesty; its homage to its Maker; its self-dedication: than which nothing more suits the state of a creature, or the spirit of a saint. And as it is suitable, 'tis pleasant. 'Tis that by which the blessed soul becomes, in its own sense, a consecrated thing, a devoted thing, sacred to God: its very life and whole being referred and made over to him. With what delightful relishes, what sweet gusts of pleasure, is this done! while the soul tastes its own act; approves it with a full ungainsaying judgment; apprehends the condignity and fitness of it; assents to itself herein; and hath the ready suffrage, the harmonious concurrence, of all its powers! When the words are no sooner spoken, "Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive glory, honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created;" but they are resounded from the penetralia, the *inmost bowels*, the most intimate receptacles and secret chambers of the soul, O Lord, thou art worthy: worthy, that I, and all things, should be to thee: worthy, to be the Omega, as thou art the Alpha, the last, as thou art the first; the end, as thou art the beginning, of all things; the ocean into which all being shall flow, as the fountain from which it sprung. My whole self, and all my powers, the excellencies now implanted in my being, the privileges of my now glorified state, are all worth nothing to me but for thee; please me only, as they make me fitter for thee. O the pleasure of these sentiments, the joy of such raptures; when the soul shall have no other notion of itself, than of an everlasting sacrifice, always ascending to God in its own flames.

For this devotedness and subjection speak not barely an act, but a state; a [c]being to the praise of grace; a living to God. And 'tis no mean pleasure that the sincere soul finds, in the imperfect beginnings, the first essays of this life, the initial breathings of such a spirit, its entrance into this blessed state; when it makes the first tender and present of itself to God; (as the apostle expresses it;) when it first begins to esteem itself a hallowed thing, separate and set apart for God; its first act of unfeigned self-resignation; when it tells God from the very heart, "I now give up myself to thee to be thine." Never was marriage-covenant made with such pleasure, with so complacential

[c] Rom. xii. 1.

consent. This quitting claim to ourselves, parting with ourselves upon such terms, to be the Lord's for ever: O the peace, the rest, the acquiescence of spirit that attends it! When the poor soul that was weary of itself, knew not what to do with itself, hath now on the sudden found this way of disposing itself to such an advantage; there is pleasure in this treaty. Even the previous breakings and relentings of the soul towards God are pleasant. But O the pleasure of consent! of[d] yielding ourselves to God, as the apostle's expression is; when the soul is overcome, and cries out, "Lord, now I resign, I yield; possess now thy own right, I give up myself to thee." That yielding is subjection, self-devoting; in order to future service and obedience, [e]To whom ye yield ourselves servants to obey, &c. And never did any man enrol himself, as a servant to the greatest prince on earth, with such joy. What pleasure is there in the often iterated recognition of these transactions; in multiplying such bonds upon a man's own soul (though done faintly, while the fear of breaking checks its joy in taking them on!) When in the uttering of these words,[f] I am thy servant, O Lord; thy servant, the son of thine hand-maid, *i. e.* thy born-servant, (alluding to that custom and law among the Jews,)[g] thy servant devoted to thy fear; a man finds they fit his spirit, and are aptly expressive of the true sense of his soul; is it not a grateful thing? And how pleasant is a state of life consequent and agreeable to such transactions and covenants with God! When 'tis meat and drink to do his will! When his zeal eats a man up; and one shall find himself secretly consuming for God! and the vigour of his soul exhaled in his service! Is it not a pleasant thing so to spend and be spent? When one can in a measure find that his will is one with God's, transformed into the Divine will: that there is but one common will, and interest, and end between him and us; and so, that in serving God we reign with him; in spending ourselves for him, we are perfected in him. Is not this a pleasant life? Some heathens have spoken at such a rate of this kind of life, as might make us wonder and blush. One speaking of a virtuous person saith, "[h]*He is a good soldier that bears wounds*, and numbers scars; and at last, smitten through with darts, dying, will love the emperor for whom he falls: he will

d Rom. vi. 13. e Ver. 16.
f Psal. cxvi. 16. g Psal. cxix. 86.
h Seneca de vita beata, lib. xv. Et ut bonus miles feret vulnera, &c.

(saith he) keep in mind that ancient precept, Follow God. But there are that complain, cry out and groan, and are compelled by force to do his commands, and hurried into them against their will; and what a madness is it (said he) to be drawn rather than follow!" And presently after subjoins, "We are born in a kingdom; to obey God is liberty." The same person writes in a letter to a friend: "[i]If thou believe me when I most freely discover to thee the most secret fixed temper of my soul, in all things my mind is thus formed: I obey not God so properly as I assent to him. I follow him with all my heart, not because I cannot avoid it." And another, "[k]Lead me to whatsoever I am appointed, and I will follow thee cheerfully; but if I refuse, or be unwilling, I shall follow notwithstanding."

A soul cast into such a mould, formed into an obedientiall subject frame, what sweet peace doth it enjoy! how pleasant rest! Every thing rests most composedly in its proper place. A bone out of joint knows no ease, nor lets the body enjoy any. The creature is not in its place but when 'tis thus subject, is in this subordination to God. By flying out of this subordination, the world of mankind is become one great disjointed body, full of weary tossings, unacquainted with ease or rest. That soul that is, but in a degree, reduced to that blessed state and temper, is as it were in a new world; so great and happy a change doth it now feel in itself. But when this transformation shall be completed in it; and the will of God shall be no sooner known than rested in with a complacential approbation; and every motion of the first and great Mover shall be an efficacious law, to guide and determine all our motions; and the lesser wheels shall presently run at the first impulse of the great and master-wheel, without the least rub or hesitation; when the law of sin shall no longer check the law of God; when all the contentions of a rebellious flesh, all the counter-strivings of a perverse, ungovernable heart, shall cease for ever; O unconceivable blessedness of this consent, the pleasure of this joyful harmony, this peaceful accord! Obedience, where 'tis due but from one creature to another, carries its no small advantages with it, and conducibleness to a pleasant unsolicitous life. To be particularly prescribed to in things about which our minds would otherwise be tost with various apprehensions, anxious, uncertain thoughts; how

[i] Epist. xcvi. [k] Epictet. Enchir.

great a privilege is it! I cannot forget a pertinent passage of an excellent person of recent memory.[l] And (saith he) for pleasure, I shall profess myself so far from doting on that popular idol liberty, that I hardly think it possible for any kind of obedience to be more painful than an unrestrained liberty. Were there not true bounds of magistrates, of laws, of piety, of reason in the heart, every man would have a fool, I add, a mad tyrant, to his master, that would multiply more sorrows, than briers and thorns did to Adam, when he was freed from the bliss at once, and the restraint of paradise; and was sure greater slave in the wilderness, than in the enclosure. Would but the Scripture permit me that kind of idolatry, the binding my faith and obedience to any one visible infallible judge or prince, were it the Pope, or the Mufti, or the Grand Tartar; might it be reconcilable with my creed, it would be certainly with my interest, to get presently into that posture of obedience. I should learn so much of the barbarian ambassadors in Appian, which came on purpose to the Romans to negotiate for leave to be their servants. 'Twould be my policy, if not my piety; and may now be my wish, though not my faith, that I might never have the trouble to deliberate, to dispute, to doubt, to choose, (those so many profitless uneasiness,) but only the favour to receive commands, and the meekness to obey them. How pleasurable then must obedience be to the perfect will of the blessed God, when our wills shall also be perfectly attempered and conformed thereunto! Therefore are we taught, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.[m] *What is most perfect in its kind, gives rule to the rest.*

3. Love. This is an eminent part of the image or likeness of God in his saints; as it is that great attribute of the Divine being that is, alone, put to give us a notion of God:[n] God is love. This is an excellency (consider it whether in its original, or copy) made up of pleasantnesses. All love hath complacency or pleasure in the nature and most formal notion of it. To search for pleasure in love is the same thing as if a man should be solicitous to find water in the sea, or light in the body of the sun. Love to a friend is not without high pleasure, when especially he is actually present and enjoyed: love to a saint rises higher in nobleness and pleasure, according to the more excellent

l Dr. Hammond's Sermon of Christ's easy yoke.
m Perfectissimum in suo genere est mensura reliquorum.
n 1 John iv. 8, 16.

qualification of its object. 'Tis now in its highest improvement, in both these aspects of it; where whatsoever tends to gratify our nature, whether as human, or holy, will be in its full perfection. Now doth the soul take up its stated dwelling in love, even in God, who is love, and as he is love; 'tis now enclosed with love, encompassed with love, 'tis conversant in the proper region and element of love. The love of God is now perfected in it. That love which is not only participated from him, but terminated in him, that perfect love, casts out tormenting fear; so that here is pleasure without mixture. How naturally will the blessed soul now dissolve and melt into pleasure! It is new-framed on purpose for love-embraces and enjoyments. It shall now love like God, as one composed of love. It shall no longer be its complaint and burden, that it cannot retaliate in this kind; that being beloved it cannot love.

4. Purity. Herein also must the blessed soul resemble God, and delight itself. Every one that hath this hope, (*viz.* of being hereafter like God, and seeing him as he is,) purifieth himself as he is pure. A God-like purity is intimately connected with the expectation of future blessedness, much more with the fruition. "Blessed are the pure in heart;" besides the reason there annexed, "for they shall see God;" (which is to be considered under the other head, the pleasure under which this likeness disposes;) that proposition carries its own reason in itself. It is an incomparable pleasure that purity carries in its own nature; as sin hath in its very nature, besides its consequent guilt and sorrow, trouble and torment beyond expression. Whatsoever defiles, doth also disturb; nor do any but pure pleasures deserve the name. An Epicurus himself will tell us,[p] *there cannot be pleasure without wisdom, honesty, and righteousness.* 'Tis least of all possible there should, when once a person shall have a right knowledge of himself, and (which is the moral impurity whereof we speak) the filthiness of sin. I doubt not but much of the torment of hell will consist in those too late and despairing self-loathings, those sickly resentments, the impure wretches will be possessed with, when they see what hideous deformed monsters their own wickedness hath made them. Here the

o 1 John iv.

p Whose doctrine, as to this matter of pleasure, is not so much to be blamed as his practice, if both be rightly represented to us. Ουκ εστι ηδεως ζην ανευ του φρονιμως και δικαιως. Ex. Cicer. 1. de Fin.

gratifications of sense that attend it, bribe and seduce their judgments into another estimate of sin: but then it shall be no longer thought of under the more favourable notion of a γλυκεπικρον; they shall taste nothing but the gall and worm-wood. 'Tis certainly no improbable thing, but that reason being now so fully rectified and undeceived, vizors torn off, and things now appearing in their own likeness; so much will be seen and apprehended of the intrinsic evil and malignity of their vitiated nature, as will serve for the matter of further torment; while yet such a sight can do no more to a change of their temper, than the devils' faith doth to theirs. Such sights being accompanied with their no-hope of ever attaining a better state, do therefore no way tend to mollify or demulce their spirits, but to increase their rage and torment. It is however out of question, that the purity of heaven will infinitely enhance the pleasure of it: for 'tis more certain, the intrinsical goodness of holiness (which term I need not among these instances; inasmuch as the thing admits not of one entire notion, but lies partly under this head, partly under the second, that of devotedness to God) will be fully understood in heaven, than the intrinsical evil of sin in hell: and when it is understood, will it not effect? will it not please? Even here, how pleasing are things to the pure, (but in degree so,) that participate of the Divine purity! [q]Thy word is very pure, saith the Psalmist, therefore thy servant loveth it. Under this notion do holy ones take pleasure each in other; because they see somewhat of the Divine likeness, their Father's image, in one another: will it not be much more pleasing to find it each one perfect in himself? to feel the ease, and peace, and rest, that naturally goes with it? A man that hath any love of cleanliness, if casually plunged into the mire, he knows not what to do with himself, he fancies his own clothes to abhor him; (as [r]Job rhetorically speaks;) so doth as natural a pleasure attend purity: it hath it even in itself. [s]The words of the pure (saith the wise man) are pleasant words; words of pleasantnesses, it might be read. That pure breath that goes from him, is not without a certain pleasurableness accompanying it. And if so to another, much more to himself, especially when every thing corresponds; and (as the expression is) he finds himself clean throughout.

q Psal. cxix. 140.
s Prov. xv. 26.
r Job. ix.

5. Liberty, another part of the Divine likeness, wherein we are to imitate God, cannot but be an unspeakable satisfaction. Supposing such a state of the notion of liberty as may render it really a perfection; which otherwise it would be a wickedness to impute to God, and an impossibility to partake from him. I here speak of the moral liberty of a saint, as such; not of the natural liberty of a man, as a man: and of the liberty consummate of saints in glory; not of the inchoate, imperfect liberty of saints on earth. And therefore the intricate controversies about the liberty of the human will lie out of our way, and need not give us any trouble. 'Tis out of question that this liberty consists not (whatever may be said of any other) in an equal propension to good or evil; nor in the will's independency on the practical understanding; nor in a various uncertain mutability, or inconstancy; nor is it such as is opposed to all necessity; 'tis not a liberty from the government of God,[t] nor from a determination to the simply best and most eligible objects. But it is a liberty from the servitude of sin, from the seduction of a misguided judgment, and the allurement of any insnaring forbidden object; consisting in an abounded amplitude and enlargedness of soul towards God, and indetermination to any inferior good: resulting[u] from an entire subjection to the Divine will, a submission to the order of God, and steady adherence to him. And unto which the many descriptions and elogies agree most indisputably, which from sundry authors are congested together by Gibieuf, in that ingenious tractate of liberty. As that, He is free that lives as he will (from Cicero, insisted on by S. Aug. de Civit. Dei, lib. 14. c. 25.)—*i. e.* who neither wishes any thing, nor fears any thing; who in all things acquiesces in the will of God; who minds nothing but his own things, and accounts nothing his own but God; who favours nothing but God; who is moved only by the will of God. Again; He is free, that cannot be hindered, being willing, nor forced, being unwilling (from Epictetus)—*i. e.* who hath always his will; as having perfectly subjected it to the will of God, as the same author explains himself. Again; He is free that is master of himself (from the Civilians) *i. e.* (as that

t Which is a no more desirable state than that which, I remember, the historian tells us was the condition of the Armenians; who having cast off the government that was over them, became Incerti, solutique, et magis sine Domino quam in libertate. Tacit. Ann. l. 2.

u Libertas nostra non est subjectio ad Deum formaliter, sed amplitudo consequens eam. Gibieuf. De libert. Dei et creaturæ, lib. 1. c. 32.

liberty respects the spirit of a man) that hath a mind independent on any thing foreign and alien to himself. That only follows God (from Philo Judæus;) That lives according to his own reason (from Aristotle:) with many more of like import; that alone does fully and perfectly suit that state of liberty the blessed soul shall hereafter eternally enjoy; as that author often acknowledges.

This is the glorious liberty of the children of God; the liberty wherewith the Son makes free. Liberty indeed, measured and regulated by the royal law of liberty, and which is perfected only in a perfect conformity thereto. There is a most servile [x]liberty, a being [y]free from righteousness, which under that specious name and show, [z]enslaves a man to corruption: and there is as free a service, by which a man is still the more free, by how much the more he serves, and is subject to his superior's will, and governing influences; and by how much the less possible it is he should swerve therefrom.[a] The nearest approaches therefore of the soul to God; its most intimate union with him, and entire subjection to him in its glorified state, makes its liberty consummate. Now is its deliverance complete, its bands are fallen off; 'tis perfectly disentangled from all the snares of death, in which it was formerly held; 'tis under no restraints, oppressed by no weights, held down by no clogs; it hath free exercise of all its powers; hath every faculty and affection at command. How unconceivable a pleasure is this! With what delight doth the poor prisoner entertain himself, when his manacles and fetters are knocked off! when he is enlarged from his loathsome dungeon, and the house of his bondage; breathes in a free air; can dispose of himself, and walk at liberty whither he will! The bird escaped from his cage, or freed from his line and stone, that resisted its vain and too feeble strugglings before; how pleasantly doth it range! with what joy doth it clap its wings, and take its flight! A faint emblem of the joy, wherewith that pleasant cheerful note shall one day be sung and chanted forth. Our soul is escaped, as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken and we are escaped. There is now no

x Quam invenere sibi, adjuvant servitutem. Et sunt, quodammodo, propria Libertate captivi. Boeth. ex Gib. Nectit qua valeat trahi catenam. Sen. Trag.
y Rom. vi. 20. z 2 Peter ii.
a Liberior quo divinæ gratiæ subjectior. Primum Libbrum arbitrium, quod homini datum est, quando primum creatus est rectus, potuit non peccare; sed potuit et peccare. Hoc autem novissimum eo potentius erit, quo peccare non potuit. Aug. de Civitat. Dei, lib. 22. c. 30.

place for such a complaint, I would, but I cannot; I would turn my thoughts to glorious objects, but I cannot. The blessed soul feels itself free from all confinement: nothing resists its will, as its will doth never resist the will of God. It knows no limits, no restraints; is not tied up to this or that particular good; but expatiates freely in the immense, universal, all-comprehending goodness of God himself. And this liberty is the perfect image and likeness of the liberty of God, especially in its consummate state. In is progress towards it, it increases as the soul draws nearer to God: which nearer approach is not in respect of place or local nearness, but likeness and conformity to him; in respect whereof, as God is most sublime and excellent in himself, so is it in him.[b] Its consummate liberty is, when it is so fully transformed into that likeness of God, as that he is all to it, as to himself: so that as he is an infinite satisfaction to himself; his likeness in this respect, is the very satisfaction itself of the blessed soul.

6. Tranquillity. This also is an eminent part of that assimilation to God, wherein the blessedness of the holy soul must be understood to lie: a perfect composure, a perpetual and everlasting calm, an eternal vacancy from all unquietness or perturbation. Nothing can be supposed more inseparably agreeing to the nature of God than this: whom Scripture witnesses to be without variableness or shadow of change. There can be no commotion without mutation, nor can the least mutation have place in a perfectly simple and uncompounded nature: whence even pagan reason hath been wont to attribute the most undisturbed and unalterable tranquillity to the nature of God. Balaam knew it was incompatible to him to lie, or repent. And (supposing him to speak this from a present inspiration) it is their common doctrine concerning God. *Any*,

b Libertas nostra inhæret divinæ, ut exemplari, et in perpetua ejus imitatione versatur, sive ortum, sive progressum, sive consummationem ejus intuearis. Libertas nostra, in ortu, est capacitas Dei. In progressu, libertas res est longe clarior: progressus enim attenditur penes accessum hominis ad Deum; qui quidem non locali propinquitate, sed imitatione et assimilatione constat, et ea utique imitatione, et assimilatione secundum quam, sicut Deus est sublimis, et excelsus seipso; ita homo est sublimis, et excelsus Deo, et altitudo ejus Deus est, ut inquit D. Augustinus. Consummatio denique libertatis est, cum homo in Deum, felicissimo gloriæ cœlestis statu transformatur; et Deus omnia ille esse incipit. Qui quidem postremus status, eo differt a priore;—quippe homo tum non modo inalligatus est creaturis, sed nec circa illas negotiatur, etiam referendo in finem—nec in creaturis se infundit, nec per illas procedit, ut faciebat cum esset viator: sed in solo Deo, et conquiescit et effundit se placidissime, et motus ejus, cum sit ad presentissimum et conjunctissimum bonum, similior est quieti quam motui. Gib. l 2. c. 14.

the least troubles and tempests, saith one,[c] *are far exiled from the tranquillity of God; for all the inhabitants of heaven do ever enjoy the same stable tenour, even an eternal equality of mind.* And a little after speaking of God, saith he, "'Tis neither possible he should be moved by the force of another, for nothing is stronger than God; nor of his own accord, for nothing is perfecter than God." And whereas there is somewhat that is mutable and subject to change; somewhat that is stable and fixed: *In which of those natures*, saith another,[d] *shall we place God? must we not in that which is more stable and fixed, and free from this fluidness and mutability? For what is there among all beings, that can be stable or consist, if God do not by his own touch stay and sustain the nature of it?*

Hence it is made a piece of deformity, of likeness to God, by another who tells his friend,[e] *It is a high and great thing which thou desirest, and even bordering upon a Deity: not to be moved.* Yea, so hath this doctrine been insisted on by them, that (while other Divine perfections have been less understood) it hath occasioned the Stoical assertion of fatality to be introduced on the one hand, and the Epicurean negation of providence on the other; lest any thing should be admitted that might seem repugnant to the tranquillity of their numina. But we know that our God doth whatsoever pleaseth him, both in heaven and earth; and that he doth all according to the wise counsel of his holy will; freely, not fatally, upon the eternal provision and foresight of all circumstances and events; so that nothing can occur that is new to him, nothing that he knows not how to improve to good; or that can therefore infer any alteration of his counsels, or occasion to him the least perturbation or disquiet in reference to them.

Holy souls begin herein to imitate him, as soon as they first give themselves up to his wise and gracious conduct. 'Tis enough that he is wise for himself and them. Their hearts safely trust in him. They commit themselves with unsolicitous confidence to his guidance; knowing he cannot himself be misled, and that he will not mislead them: as Abraham followed him, not knowing whither he went.

c Omnes turbulæ tempestates quæ procul a Deorum cœlestium tranquillitate exulant, &c. Apuleius de Deo Socratis.

d —Ἐν ποτερα των φυρεων τουτων τον θεον τακτεον; αρα ουκ εν ϛασιμωτερα και εδραιοτερα, και απηλλαγμενη του ρευματος τουτου, &c. Max. Tyr. disser. 1.

e Quod desideras autem magnum, summum est. Deoque vicinum; non concuti. Sen. de tranquil. Animi.

And thus, by faith, they enter into his rest. They do now in their present state only enter into it, or hover about the borders: their future assimilation to God in this, gives them a stated settlement of spirit in this rest. They before did owe their tranquillity to their faith; now to their actual fruition. Their former acquiescency, and sedate temper, was hence, that they believed God would deal well with them at last; their present, for that he hath done so. Those words have now their fullest sense, (both as to the rest itself which they mention, and the season of it,) [f]Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. The occasions of trouble, and a passive temper of spirit, are ceased together. There is now no fear without, nor terror within. The rage of the world is now allayed, it storms no longer. Reproach and persecution have found a period. There is no more dragging before tribunals, nor haling into prisons; no more running into dens and deserts; or wandering to and fro in sheepskins and goatskins. And with the cessation of the external occasions of trouble, the inward dispositions thereto are also ceased. All infirmities of spirit, tumultuating passions, unmortified corruptions, doubts, or imperfect knowledge of the love of God, are altogether vanished, and done away for ever. And indeed, that perfect cure wrought within, is the soul's great security from all future disquiet. A well tempered spirit hath been wont strangely to preserve its own peace in this unquiet world. Philosophy hath boasted much in this kind; and Christianity performed more. The philosophical (γαληνη, or) calmness of mind, is not without its excellency and praise: "That stable settlement and fixedness of spirit, that ἐυθυμία, (as the moralist [g] tells us, it was wont to be termed among the Grecians, and which he calls tranquillity,) when the mind is always equal, and goes a smooth, even course, is propitious to itself, and beholds the things that concern it with pleasure, and interrupts not this joy, but remains in a placid state, never at any time exalting or depressing itself." But how far doth the Christian peace surpass it! [h]that peace which passeth all understanding; that amidst surrounding dangers, enables the holy soul to say, (without a proud boast,) [i]None of all these things move me: the peace that immediately results from that faith which unites the soul with God, and fixes it upon him as its firm

[f] Psal. cxvi. 7.
[g] Sen. de Tranquil. Anim.
[h] Phil. iv. 7.
[i] Acts xx. 24.

basis; when 'tis [k] kept in perfect peace, by being stayed upon him, because it trusts in him; when the heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord; filled full of joy and peace, or of joyous peace, (by an ἐν ἀὰ ὀνοῖν,) in believing. And if philosophy and (which far transcends it) Christianity, reason and faith, have that statique power, can so compose the soul, and reduce it to so quiet a consistency in the midst of storms and tempests; how perfect and contentful a repose, will the immediate vision and enjoyment of God afford it, in that serene and peaceful region, where it shall dwell for ever, free from any molestation from without, or principle of disrest within!

CHAPTER IX.

The pleasure arising from knowing, or considering ourselves to be like God; from considering it, 1. Absolutely, 2. Comparatively, or respectively; To the former state of the soul, To the state of lost souls, To its pattern, To the way of accomplishment, To the soul's own expectations, To what it secures. The pleasure whereto it disposes, of union, communion. A comparison of this righteousness, with this blessedness.

2. Here is also to be considered, the pleasure and satisfaction involved in this assimilation to God, as it is known or reflected on, or that arises from the *cognosci* of this likeness. We have hitherto discoursed of the pleasure of being like God, as that is apprehended by a spiritual sensation, a feeling of that inward rectitude, that happy pleasure of souls now perfectly restored: we have yet to consider a further pleasure, which accrues from the soul's animadversion upon itself, its contemplating itself thus happily transformed. And though that very sensatica be not without some animadversion, (as indeed no sensible perception can be performed without it,) yet we must conceive a consequent animadversion, which is much more explicit and distinct; and which therefore yields a very great addition of satisfaction and delight: as when the blessed soul shall turn its eye upon itself, and designedly compose and set itself to consider its present state and frame; the consideration it shall now have of itself, and this likeness impressed upon it, may be either—absolute, or—comparative and respective.

[k] Isa. xxvi. 3. Psal. cxii. 7. Rom. xv. 13.

1. Absolute. How pleasing a spectacle will this be, when the glorified soul shall now intentively behold its own glorious frame! when it shall dwell in the contemplation of itself! view itself round on every part, turn its eye from glory to glory, from beauty to beauty, from one excellency to another; and trace over the whole draught of this image, this so exquisite piece of divine workmanship, drawn out in its full perfection upon itself! when the glorified eye, and divinely enlightened and inspirited mind, shall apply itself to criticise, and make a judgment upon every several lineament, every touch and stroke; shall stay itself, and scrupulously insist upon every part; view at leisure every character of glory the blessed God hath instamped upon it; how will this likeness now satisfy! And that expression of the blessed apostle, (taken notice of upon some other occasion formerly,) "the glory to be revealed in us," seems to import in it a reference to such a self-intuition. What serves revelation for, but in order to vision? what is it, but an exposing things to view? And what is revealed in us, is chiefly exposed to our own view. All the time, from the soul's first conversion till now, God hath been as it were at work upon it, ("He that hath wrought us to, &c.) hath been labouring it, shaping it, polishing it, spreading his own glory upon it, inlaying, enamelling it with glory: now at last, the whole work is revealed, the curtain is drawn aside, the blessed soul awakes. "Come now," saith God, "behold my work, see what I have done upon thee, let my work now see the light; I dare expose it to the censure of the most curious eye; let thine own have the pleasure of beholding it." It was a work carried on in a mystery, secretly wrought (as in the lower parts of the earth, as we alluded before) by a spirit that came and went no man could tell how. Besides, that in the general only, we knew we should be like him, it did not yet appear what we should be; now it appears: there is a revelation of this glory. O the ravishing pleasure of its first appearance! And it will be a glory always fresh and flourishing, (as Job's expression is, "my glory was fresh in me,") and will afford a fresh, undecaying pleasure for ever.

2. The blessed soul may also be supposed to have a comparative and respective consideration of the impressed glory. That is, so as to compare it with, and refer it to, several things that may come into consideration with it:

[a] 2 Cor. v. 5.

and may so heighten its own delight in the contemplation thereof.

1. If we consider this impression of glory, in reference to its former loathsome deformities that were upon it, and which are now vanished and gone; how unconceivable a pleasure will arise from this comparison! When the soul shall consider at once what it is, and what once it was, and thus bethink itself: I that did sometimes bear the accursed image of the prince of darkness, do now represent and partake of the holy, pure nature of the Father of lights: I was a mere chaos, a hideous heap of deformity, confusion, and darkness,[b] but he that made light to shine out of darkness, shined into me, to give the knowledge of the light of his own glory in the face of Jesus Christ; and since, made my[c] way as the shining light, shining brighter and brighter unto this perfect day. I was a habitation for dragons, a cage for noisome lusts, that, as serpents and vipers, were winding to and fro through all my faculties and powers, and preying upon my very vitals. Then was I hateful to God, and a hater of him; sin and vanity had all my heart. The charming invitations and allurements of grace were as music to a dead man; to think a serious thought of God, or breathe forth an affectionate desire after him, was as much against my heart, as to pluck out mine own eyes, or offer violence to mine own life. After I began to live the spiritual, new life, how slow and faint was my progress and tendency towards perfection! how indisposed did I find myself to the proper actions of that life! To go about any holy, spiritual work, was, too often, as to climb a hill, or strive against the stream; or as an attempt to fly without wings. I have sometimes said to my heart, Come, now let's go pray, love God, think of heaven; but O how listless to these things! how lifeless in them! Impressions made, how quickly lost! gracious frames, how soon wrought off and gone! characters of glory razed out, and overspread with earth and dirt! Divine comeliness hath now at length made me perfect: the glory of God doth now inclothe me; they are his ornaments I now wear. He hath made me, that lately lay among the pots, as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold; he hath put another nature into me, the true likeness of his own holy divine nature; he hath now perfectly mastered

b 2 Cor. iv. 6. c Prov. iv. 18.

and wrought out the enmity of my heart against him: now to be with God is my very element; loving, admiring, praising him, are as natural as breathing once was. I am all spirit and life, I feel myself disburdened, and unclogged of all the heavy, oppressive weights that hung upon me; no body of death doth now encumber me, no deadness of heart, no coldness of love, no drowsy sloth, no averseness from God, no earthly mind, no sensual inclinations or affections, no sinful divisions of heart between God and creatures: he hath now the whole of me: I enjoy and delight in none but him: O blessed change! O happy day!

2. If in contemplating itself, clothed with this likeness, it respect the state of damned souls, what transports must that occasion! what ravishing resentments! When it compares human nature in its highest perfection, with the same nature in its utmost depravation! An unspeakably more unequal comparison than that would be, of the most amiable lovely person, flourishing in the prime of youthful strength and beauty, with a putrified rotten carcass, deformed by the corruption of a loathsome grave. When glorified spirits shall make such a reflection as this: Lo, here we shine in the glorious brightness of the Divine image; and behold yonder deformed accursed souls: they were as capable of this glory as we; had the same nature with us, the same reason, the same intellectual faculties and powers; but what monsters are they now become! They eternally hate the eternal excellency. Sin and death are finished upon them. They have each of them a hell of horror and wickedness in itself. Whence is this amazing difference? Though this cannot but be an awful wonder, it cannot also but be tempered with pleasure and joy.

3. We may suppose this likeness to be considered in reference to its pattern, and in comparison therewith; which will then be another way of heightening the pleasure that shall arise thence. Such a frame and constitution of spirit is full of delights in itself; but when it shall be referred to its original, and the correspondency between the one and the other be observed and viewed; how exactly they accord, and answer each other, as face doth face in the water; this cannot still but add pleasure to pleasure, one delight to another. When the blessed soul shall interchangeably turn its eye to God, and itself; and consider the agreement of glory to glory; the several derived excel-

lencies to the original: He is wise, and so am I; holy, and so am I: I am now made perfect as my heavenly Father is: this gives a new relish to the former pleasure. How will this likeness please under that notion, as it is his; a likeness to him! O the accent that will be put upon those appropriative words, to be made partakers of his holiness, and of the Divine nature! Personal excellencies in themselves considered, cannot be reflected on, but with some pleasure; but to the ingenuity of a child, how especially grateful will it be, to observe in itself such and such graceful deportments, wherein it naturally imitates its father! So he was wont to speak, and act, and demean himself. How natural is it unto love to affect and aim at the imitation of the person loved! So natural it must be to take complacency therein; when we have hit our mark, and achieved our design. The pursuits and attainments of love are proportionable and correspondent each to other. And what heart can compass the greatness of this thought, to be made like God! Lord, was there no lower pattern than thyself, thy glorious blessed self, according to which to form a worm! This cannot want its due resentments in a glorified state.

4. This transformation of the blessed soul into the likeness of God, may be viewed by it, in reference to the way of accomplishment; as an end, brought about by so amazing stupendous means: which will certainly be a pleasing contemplation. When it reflects on the method and course insisted on, for bringing this matter to pass; views over the work of redemption in its tendency to this end, [d]the restoring God's image in souls; considers Christ manifested to us, in order to his being revealed and formed in us: that God was made in the likeness of man, to make men after the likeness of God; that he partook with us of the human nature, that we might with him partake of the divine; that he assumed our flesh, in order to impart to us his Spirit: when it shall be considered, for this end had we so many [e]great and precious promises; for this end did the glory of the [f]Lord shine upon us through the glass of the gospel; that we might be made partakers, &c. that we might be changed, &c. Yea, when it shall be called to mind, (though it be far from following hence, that this is the only or principal way, wherein the life and death of Christ have influence, in order to our eternal happiness,)

d Phil. ii. 7. e 2 Pet. i. 4. f 2 Cor. iii. 18.

that our Lord Jesus lived for this end, that we might learn so to walk, as he also walked; that he died that we might be conformed to his death; that he rose again that we might with him attain the resurrection of the dead; that he was in us the hope of glory, that he might be in us (that is, the same image that bears his name) our final consummate glory itself also: with what pleasure will these harmonious congruities, these apt correspondencies, be looked into at last! Now may the glorified saint say, I here see the end the Lord Jesus came into the world for; I see for what he was lift up, made a spectacle; that he might be a transforming one: what the effusions of his Spirit were for; why it so earnestly strove with my wayward heart. I now behold in my own soul, the fruit of the travail of his soul. This was the project of redeeming love, the design of all-powerful gospel-grace. Glorious achievement! blessed end of that great and notable undertaking! happy issue of that high design!

5. With a reference to all their own expectations and endeavours. When it shall be considered by a saint in glory; the attainment of this perfect likeness to God, was the utmost mark of all my designs and aims; the term of all my hopes and desires: this is that I longed and laboured for; that which I prayed and waited for; which I so earnestly breathed after, and restlessly pursued: it was but to recover the defaced image of God; to be again made like him, as once I was. Now I have attained my end; I have the fruit of all my labour and travails; I see now the truth of those (often) encouraging words, blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Be not weary in well-doing, for ye shall reap, if ye faint not. What would I once have given for a steady, abiding frame of holiness, for a heart constantly bent and biassed toward God; constantly serious, constantly tender, lively, watchful, heavenly, spiritual, meek, humble, cheerful, self-denying! How have I cried and striven for this, to get such a heart! such a temper of spirit! How have I pleaded with God and my own soul, in order hereto! How often over have I spread this desire before the Searcher and Judge of hearts! Turn me out of all my worldly comforts, so thou give me but such a heart; let me spend my days in a prison, or a desert, so I have but such a heart; I refuse no reproaches, no losses, no tortures, may I but have such a heart. How hath my soul been

sometimes ravished with the very thoughts of such a temper of spirit, as hath appeared amiable in my eye, but I could not attain! and what a torture again hath it been that I could not! What grievance in all the world, in all the days of my vanity, did I ever find comparable to this; to be able to frame to myself by Scripture, and rational light and rules, the notion and idea of an excellent temper of spirit; and then to behold it, to have it in view, and not be able to reach it, to possess my soul of it? What indignation have I sometimes conceived against mine own soul, when I have found it wandering, and could not reduce it; hovering, and could not fix it; dead, and could not quicken it; low, and could not raise it! How earnestly have I expected this blessed day, when all those distempers should be perfectly healed, and my soul recover a healthy, lively, spiritual frame! What fresh ebullitions of joy will here be, when all former desires, hopes, endeavours, are crowned with success and fruit! This joy is the joy of harvest. [g]They that have sown in tears, do now reap in joy. They that went out weeping, bearing precious seed; now with rejoicing, bring their sheaves with them.

6. In reference to what this impressed likeness shall for ever secure to it: an everlasting amity and friendship with God; that *it* shall never sin, nor *he* ever frown more.—1. That it shall sin no more. The perfected image of God in it, is its security for this; for 'tis holy throughout; in every point conformed to his nature and will; there remains in it nothing contrary to him. It may therefore certainly conclude, it shall never be liable to the danger of doing any thing, but what is good in his sight: and what solace will the blessed soul find in this! If now an angel from heaven should assure it, that from such an hour it shall sin no more, the world would not be big enough to hold such a soul. It hath now escaped the deadliest of dangers, the worst of deaths, (and which even in its present state, upon more deliberate calmer thoughts, it accounts so,) the sting of death, the very deadliness of death; the hell of hell itself. The deliverance is now complete, which cannot but end in delight and praise.—2. That God can never frown more. This 'tis hence also assured of. How can he but take perfect, everlasting complacency in his own perfect likeness and image; and behold with pleasure his glorious workmanship, now never liable to impairment or

[g] Psal. cxxvi. 6.

decay! How pleasant a thought is this, "The blessed God never beholds me but with delight! I shall always behold his serene countenance, his amiable face never covered with any clouds, never darkened with any frown! I shall now have cause to complain no more; My God is a stranger to me, he conceals himself, I cannot see his face; lo, he is encompassed with clouds and darkness, or with flames and terrors." These occasions are for ever ceased. God sees no cause, either to behold the blessed soul with displeasure, or with displeasure to avert from it, and turn off his eye. And will not this eternally satisfy? When God himself is so well pleased, shall not we?

2. The pleasure it disposes to. Besides that the in-being and knowledge of this likeness are so satisfying; it disposes, and is the soul's qualification for a yet further pleasure:—that of closest union, and most inward communion with the blessed God.

1. Union: which (what it is more than relation) is not till now complete. Besides relation it must needs import presence: not physical, or local; for so nothing can be nearer God than it is: but moral and cordial, by which the holy soul with will and affections, guided by rectified reason and judgment, closes with, and embraces him; and he also upon wise forelaid counsel, and with infinite delight and love, embraces it: so friends are said to be one (besides their relation as friends) by a union of hearts. A union between God and the creature, as to kind and nature higher than this, and lower than hypostatical or personal union, I understand not, and therefore say nothing of it.[h]

But as to the union here mentioned: as, till the image of God be perfected, it is not completed; so it cannot but be perfect then. When the soul is perfectly formed according to God's own heart, and fully participates the Divine likeness, is perfectly like him; that likeness cannot but infer the most intimate union that two such natures can admit: that is, (for nature,) a love union; such as that which our Saviour mentions, and prays to the Father to perfect, between themselves and all believers, and among believers mutually with one another. Many much trouble themselves about this[i] scripture; but sure that can be no other than a love-union. For, (1.) 'Tis such a union as

h I would fain know what the *Tertium* shall be, resulting from the physical union, some speak of.

i John xvii. 21. ver. 11. 21.

Christians are capable of among themselves; for surely he would never pray that they might be one with a union whereof they are not capable. (2.) 'Tis such a union as may be made visible to the world. Whence 'tis an obvious corollary, that the union between the Father and the Son, there spoken of as the pattern of this, is not their union or oneness in essence, (though it be a most acknowledged thing that there is such an essential union between them;) for, who can conceive that saints should be one among themselves, and with the Father and the Son, with such a union as the Father and the Son are one themselves, if the essential union between Father and Son were the union here spoken of: but the exemplary or pattern union, here mentioned between the Father and Son, is but a union in mind, in love, in design, and interest; wherein he prays, that saints on earth might visibly be one with them also, that the world might believe, &c. 'Tis yet a rich pleasure that springs up to glorified saints from that love-union (now perfected) between the blessed God and them. 'Tis mentioned and shadowed in Scripture, under the name and notion of marriage-union; in which the greatest mutual complacency is always supposed a necessary ingredient. To be thus joined to the [k] Lord, and made as it were one spirit with him; for the eternal God to cleave in love to a nothing-creature, as his likeness upon it engages him to do; is this no pleasure, or a mean one?

2. Communion: unto which that union is fundamental, and introductive; and which follows it upon the same ground, from a natural propensity of like to like. There is nothing now to hinder God and the holy soul of the most inward fruitions and enjoyments; no animosity, no strangeness, no unsuitableness on either part. Here the glorified spirits of the just have liberty to solace themselves amidst the rivers of pleasure at God's own right hand, without check or restraint. They are pure, and these pure. They touch nothing that can defile, they defile nothing they can touch. They are not now forbidden the nearest approaches to the *once* inaccessible Majesty; there is no holy of holies into which they may not enter, no door locked up against them. They may have free admission into the innermost secret of the Divine presence, and pour forth themselves in the most liberal effusions of love and joy: as they must be the eternal subject of those infinitely richer

[k] 1 Cor. vi. 16.

communications from God, even of immense and boundless love and goodness. Do not debase this pleasure by low thoughts, nor frame too daring, positive apprehensions of it. 'Tis yet a secret to us. The eternal converses of the King of glory with glorified spirits, are only known to himself and them. That expression, (which we so often meet in our way,) "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," seems left on purpose to check a too curious and prying inquisitiveness into these unrevealed things. The great God will have his reserves of glory, of love, of pleasure for that future state. Let him alone awhile, with those who are already received into those mansions of glory, those everlasting habitations: he will find a time for those that are yet pilgrims and wandering exiles, to ascend and enter too. In the mean time, what we know of this communion may be gathered up into this general account, the reciprocation of loves; the flowing and reflowing of everlasting love, between the blessed soul and its infinitely blessed God; its egress towards him, his illapses into it. Unto such pleasure doth this likeness dispose and qualify: you can no way consider it, but it appears a most pleasurable, satisfying thing.

Thus far have we shown the qualification for this blessedness, and the nature of it; What it prerequires, and wherein it lies: and how highly congruous it is, that the former of these should be made a prerequisite to the latter, will sufficiently appear to any one that shall, in his own thoughts, compare this righteousness and this blessedness together. He will indeed plainly see, that the natural state of the case and habitude of these, each to other, make this connexion unalterable and eternal; so as that it must needs be simply impossible, to be thus blessed without being thus righteous. For what is this righteousness other than this blessedness begun, the seed and principle of it? And that with as exact proportion (or rather sameness of nature) as is between the grain sown and reaped; which is more than intimated in that of the apostle,[1] Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap: for he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; (there is the same proportion too;) but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting: which though it be spoken to a particular case, is yet spoken from a general rule and

[1] Gal. vi. 7, 8.

reason applicable a great deal further. And as some conceive (and is undertaken to be demonstrated) that the seeds of things are not virtually only, but [m]actually and formally, the very things themselves; so is it here also. The very parts of this blessedness are discernible in this righteousness, the future vision of God in present knowledge of him: for this knowledge is a real initial part of righteousness; the rectitude of the mind and apprehensions concerning God, consisting in conformity to his revelation of himself. Present holiness, including also the future assimilation to God: and the contentment and peace that attends it, the consequent satisfaction in glory. But as in glory, the impression of the Divine likeness is that which vision subserves, and whence satisfaction results; so is it here (visibly) the main thing also. The end and design of the gospel revelation, [n] of whole Christianity, (I mean systematically considered,) of all evangelical doctrines and knowledge, is to restore God's likeness and image; from whence joy and peace result of course, when once the gospel is believed. The gospel is the instrument of impressing God's likeness, in order whereunto it must be understood, and received into the mind. Being so, the impression upon the heart and life are Christianity, habitual and practical, whereupon joy and pleasure (the belief or thorough reception of the gospel thus intervening) do necessarily ensue, Rom. xv. 13. So aptly is the only way or method of seeing God's face, so as to be satisfied with his likeness, said to be in or through righteousness.

CHAPTER X.

The season of this satisfaction, which is twofold; at death and at the resurrection. The former spoken too; wherein is shown, That this life is to the soul (even of a saint) but as a sleep: That at death it awakes. As to the latter; That there is a considerable accession to its happiness at the resurrection.

3. THE season of this blessedness comes next to be considered; which (as the words, "when I awake," have been concluded here to import) must, in the general, be

m Dr. Harv. de Ovo.

n Πως ουν γινομεθα καθ ομοιωσιν; ια των ευαγγελιων. Τι εστι χριστιανισμος; θεου ομοιωσις: κατα το ενδεχομενον ανθρωπου φυσει. Greg. Nyss. in verba Faciamus hominem, &c. Orat. 1.

stated, beyond the time of this present life. Holy souls are here truly blessed, not perfectly; or their present blessedness is perfect only in nature and kind, not in degree. 'Tis, in this respect, as far short of perfection as their holiness is. Their hunger and thirst are present, their being filled is yet future. The experience of saints in their best state on earth, their desires, their hopes, their sighs and groans, do sufficiently witness they are not satisfied; or if they be in point of security, they are not in point of enjoyment. The completion of this blessedness is reserved to a better state, as its being the end of their way,[a] their rest from their labours, the reward of their work, doth import and require. Therefore many scriptures that speak of their present rest, peace, repose, satisfaction, must be understood in a comparative, not the absolute highest sense. More particularly, in that other state, the season of their blessedness is twofold; or there are two terms from whence (in respect of some gradual or modal diversifications) it may be said severally to commence, or bear date, *viz.*—The time of their entrance upon a blessed immortality, when they shall have laid down their earthly bodies in death; and—of their consummation therein, when they receive their bodies glorified in the general resurrection. Both these may not unfitly be signified by the phrase in the text, "when I awake:" for, though Scripture doth more directly apply the term of awaking to the latter, there will be no violence done to the metaphor, if we extend its signification to the former also. To which purpose it is to be noted, that it is not death formally, or the disanimating of the body, we would have here to be understood by it, (which indeed sleeping would more aptly signify than awaking,) but, what is coincident therewith in the same period, the exuscitation, and revival of the soul. When the body falls asleep, then doth the spirit awake; and the eye-lids of the morning, even of an eternal day, do now first open upon it.

1. Therefore we shall not exclude from this season the introductive state of blessedness, which takes its beginning from the blessed soul's first entrance into the invisible state. And the fitness of admitting it will appear by clearing these two things,—1. That its condition in this life, even at the best, is in some sort but a sleep: 2. That when it passes out of it into the invisible regions, 'tis truly said to awake.

[a] Matt. v. 6.

1. Its abode in this mortal body, is but a continual sleep; its senses are bound up; a drowsy slumber possesses and suspends all its faculties and powers. Before the renovating change, how frequently doth the Scripture speak of sinners as men asleep! [b]Let not us sleep as do others. Awake thou that sleepest, and stand up from the dead, &c. They are in a dead sleep, under the sleep of death: they apprehend things as men asleep. How slight, obscure, hovering notions have they of the most momentous things! and which it most concerns them to have thorough real apprehensions of! All their thoughts of God, Christ, heaven, hell, of sin, of holiness, are but uncertain, wild guesses, blind hallucinations, incoherent fancies; the absurdity and inconcinnity whereof, they no more reflect upon than men asleep. They know not these things, but only dream of them. They put darkness for light, and light for darkness; have no senses exercised to discern between good and evil. The most substantial realities are with them mere shadows, and chimeras; fancied and imagined dangers startle them, (as 'tis wont to be with men in a dream,) real ones, though never so near them, they as little fear as they. The creature of their own imagination, the lion in the way, which they dream of in their slothful slumber, affrights them; but the real roaring lion that is ready to devour them, they are not afraid of.

And conversion doth but relax, and intermit; it doth not totally break off this sleep: it, as it were, attenuates the consopiting fumes, doth not utterly dispel them. What a difficulty is it to watch but one hour! There are some lucid and vivid intervals, but of how short continuance! how soon doth the awakened soul close its heavy eyes and falls asleep again! how often do temptations surprise even such, in their slumbering fits, while no sense of their danger can prevail with them to watch and pray (with due care and constancy) lest they enter thereunto! [c]Hither are most of the sins of our lives to be imputed and referred; not to mere ignorance, that we know not sin from duty, or what will please God and what displease him; but to a drowsy inadvertency, that we keep not our spirits in a watchful considering posture. Our eyes that should be ever towards the Lord, will not be kept open, and though we resolve, we forget ourselves; before we are aware, we

b 1 Thess. v. 6. Eph. v. 14.
c So well doth the apostle's watch-word suit our case, Awake to righteousness, and sin not, &c. 1 Cor. xv. 34.

find ourselves overtaken; sleep comes on upon us like an armed man, and we cannot avert it. How often do we hear, and read, and pray, and meditate as persons asleep, as if we knew not what we were about? How remarkable useful providences escape either our notice or due improvement, amidst our secure slumbers! How many visits from heaven are lost to us, when we are as it were, between sleeping and waking![d] I sleep, but my heart waketh, and hardly own the voice that calls upon us, till our beloved hath withdrawn himself? Indeed, what is the whole of our life but a dream? the entire scene of this sensible world but a vision of the night; where every man[e] walks but in a vain show? Where we are mocked with shadows, and our credulous sense abused by impostures and delusive appearances? Nor are we ever secure from the most destructive, mischievous deception, further than as our souls are possessed with the apprehensions, that this is the very truth of our case; and thence instructed to consider, and not to prefer the shadows of time before the great realities of eternity.

Nor is this sleep casual, but even connatural to our present state, the necessary result of so strict a union and commerce with the body, which is to the in-dwelling spirit as a dormitory or charnel-house rather than a mansion. A soul drenched in sensuality,) a Lethe that hath too little of fiction in it, and immured in a slothful, putrid flesh, sleeps as it were by fate, not by chance, and is only capable of full relief by suffering a dissolution; which it hath reason to welcome as a jubilee, and in the instant of departure to sacrifice as he did, [f] (with that easy and warrantable change, to make a heathen expression scriptural,) *Jehovæ liberatori*, to adore and praise its great Deliverer: at least (accounts being once made up, and a meetness in any measure attained for the heavenly inheritance, &c.) hath no reason to regret or dread the approaches of the eternal day, more than we do the return of the sun after a dark and longsome night. But as the sluggard doth nothing more unwillingly than forsake his bed, nor bears any thing with more regret than to be awaked out of his sweet sleep, though you should entice him with the pleasures of a paradise to quit a smoky, loathsome cottage; so fares it with

d Cant. v. 2. e Psal. xxxix. 6.
f *Viz.* Seneca. Who at the time of his death sprinkled water upon the servants about him, addita voce, se liquorem illum libare Jovi liberatori. Tacit. Annal.

a sluggish soul, as if it were lodged in an enchanted bed: 'tis so fast held by the charms of the body, all the glory of the other world is little enough to tempt it out, than which there is not a more deplorable symptom of this sluggish, slumbering state. So deep an oblivion (which you know is also naturally incident to sleep) hath seized it of its own country, of its alliances above, its relation to the Father and world of spirits, it takes this earth for its home, where 'tis both in exile and captivity at once: and (as a prince stolen away in his infancy and bred up in a beggar's shed) so little seeks, that it declines a better state. This is the degenerous, torpid disposition of a soul lost in flesh, and inwrapt in stupifying clay, which hath been deeply resented by some heathens. So one brings in Socrates pathetically bewailing this oblivious dreaming temper of his soul, "which (saith he) had seen that pulchritude (you must pardon him here the conceit of its pre-existence) that neither human voice could utter, nor eye behold; but that now, in this life, it had only some little remembrance thereof, as in a dream; being both in respect of place and condition, far removed from so pleasant sights, pressed down into an earthly station, and there encompassed with all manner of dirt and filthiness, &c. And to the same purpose Plato often speaks in the name of the same person, and particularly of the winged state of the good souls when apart from the body, carried in its triumphant flying chariot, (of which he gives a large description, somewhat resembling Solomon's rapturous metaphor;[h] "Before I was aware, my soul made me as the chariots of Amminadab;") but being in the body, 'tis with it as with a bird that hath lost its wings, it falls a sluggish weight to the earth. Which indeed is the state even of the best, in a degree, within this tabernacle. A sleepy torpor stops their flight; they can fall, but not ascend; the remains of such drowsiness do still hang even about saints themselves. The apostle therefore calls upon such to[i] awake out of sleep; from that consideration, (as we know men are not wont to sleep so intensely towards morning,) that now their salvation was nearer than when they believed, *i. e.* (as some judicious interpreters[k] understand that place,) for that they were nearer death and eternity than when they first became Christians; though this passage be also otherwise, and not improbably, interpreted. However,

g πτερωμα. In Phædro.
i Rom. xiii. 11.
h Cant. vi. 13.
k Aretius, Beza, &c.

2. The holy soul's release and dismission from its earthly body, which is that we propounded next to be considered, will excuss and shake off this drowsy sleep. Now is the happy season of its awaking into the heavenly, vital light of God; the blessed morning of that long desired day is now dawned upon it, the cumbersome night-vail is laid aside, and the garments of salvation and immortal glory are now put on. It hath passed through the trouble and darkness of a wearisome night, and now is joy arrived with the morning, as we may be permitted to allude to those words of the [l] Psalmist, though that be not supposed to be the peculiar sense. I conceive myself here not concerned operously to insist in proving, that the souls of saints sleep not in the interval between death and the general resurrection, but enjoy present blessedness. It being besides the design of a practical discourse, which rather intends the propounding and improvement of things acknowledged and agreed, for the advantage and benefit of them with whom they are so, than the discussing of things dubious and controversible. And what I here propound in order to a consequent improvement and application, should, methinks, pass for an acknowledged truth among them that professedly believe, and seriously read and consider, the Bible; (for mere philosophers that do not come into this account, 'twere impertinent to discourse with them from a text of Scripture;) and where my design only obliges me to intend the handling of that, and to deliver from it what may fitly be supposed to have its ground there, unless their allegations did carry with them the show of demonstrating the simple impossibility of what is asserted thence to the power of that God whose word we take it to be; which I have not found any thing they say to amount to. That we have reason to presume it an acknowledged thing, among them that will be concluded by Scripture, That the soul doth not sleep when it ceases to animate its earthly body, many plain texts do evince, which are amassed together by the reverend Mr. Baxter;[m] some of the principal whereof I would invite any that waver in this matter seriously to consider: as the words of our Saviour to the thief on the cross,[n] This day shalt thou be with me in paradise. That of the apostle,[o] we are Willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord. And that,[p] I am in a strait, having a desire to depart, and to be

l Psal. xxx. 5. m In his Saint's Rest, p. 2, c. 10.
n Luke xxiii. 43. o 2 Cor. v. 8. p Phil. i. 23.

with Christ. That passage,[q] The spirits of just men made perfect, &c. Which are expressions so clear, that it is hard for an industrious caviller to find what to except

q Heb. xii. 23.

r 'Tis true, that divers of the fathers and others have spoken, some dubiously, some very diminishingly, of the blessedness of separate souls; many of whose words may be seen together in that elaborate tractate of the learned Parker, De Descens. l secund. p. 77. Yea, and his own assertion in that very page (be it spoken with reverence to the memory of so worthy a person) argues something gross, and I conceive, unwarrantable thoughts of the soul's dependence on a body of earth. His words are *Tertium vulnus*, (speaking of the prejudices the soul receives by its separation from the body,) *omnes operationes etiam suas, quæ sunt præsertim ad extra, extinguit.* Where he makes it a difficulty to allow it any operations at all, as appears by the *præsertim* inserted. He first indeed denies it all operations, and then, more confidently and especially, those *ad extra*. And if he would be understood to exclude it only from its operations *ad extra*, (if he takes operations *ad extra* as that phrase is wont to be taken,) he must then mean by it all such operations as have their objects, not only those that have their terms to which without the agent, i. e. not only all transient, but all imminent, acts that have their objects without them. As when we say, all God's acts *ad extra* are free; we mean it even of his immanent acts that have their objects without him, though they do not *ponere terminum extra Deum;* as his election, his love of the elect. And so he must be understood to deny the separate souls (and that with a *præsertim* too the operations of knowing God, of loving him, and delighting in him; which are all operations *ad extra*, as having their objects *extra animam*, though their *terminus ad quem* be not so: which makes the condition of the separate souls of saints unspeakably inferior to what it was in the body, and what should occasion so dismal thoughts of that state of separation, I see not. Scripture gives no ground for them, but evidently enough speaks the contrary. Reason and philosophy offer nothing that can render the sense we put upon the aforementioned plain scripture, self-contradictious or impossible. Yea, such as had no other light or guide, have thought the facility of the soul's operations, being separate from its earthly body, much greater by that very separation. And upon this score doth St. Augustine, with great indignation, inveigh against the philosophers, (Plato more especially,) because they judged the separation of the soul from the body necessary to its blessedness. *Qui videlicet ejus perfectam beatitudinem tunc illi fieri existimant cum omni prorsus corpore exuta, ad Deum simplex, et sola et quodammodo nuda ridierit.* (De civit. Dei. l. 13. c. 16.) unto which purpose the words of Philolaus Pythagoricus, of Plato, of Porphyrius, are cited by Ludovicus Vives, in his comment upon that above-mentioned passage. The first speaking thus—*Deposito corpore hominem Deum immortalem fieri.* The second thus—*Trahi nos a corpore ad ima, et a cogitatione superarum rerum subinde revocari: ideo relinquendum corpus, et hic quantum possumus et in altera vita prorsum, ut liberi et expediti, verum ipsi videamus et optimum amemus.* The third denies—*Aliter fieri beatum quemquam posse, nisi relinquat corpus et affigatur Deo.* I conceive it by the way not improbable, that the severity of that pious father against the dogma of the philosophers, might proceed upon this ground, that what they said of the impossibility of being happy in an earthly body he understood meant by them of an impossibility to be happy in any body at all; when 'tis evidently the common opinion of the Platonists, that the soul is always united with some body or other, and that even the dæmons have bodies. (aerial or ætherial ones,) which Plato himself is observed by St. Augustine to affirm, whence he would fasten a contradiction on him. *ibid* not considering ('tis likely) that he would much less have made a difficulty, to concede such bodies also to human souls after they had lost their terrestrial ones, as his sectators do not: who hold they then presently become dæmons. In the meantime 'tis evident enough, the doctrine of the separate soul's present blessedness, is not destitute of the patronage and suffrage of philosophers. And 'tis indeed the known opinion of as many of them as ever held its immortality, (which all of all ages and nations have done, a very few excepted,) for inasmuch as they knew nothing of the resurrection of the body, they could not dream of a sleeping interval. And 'tis at least a shrewd presumption, that nothing in reason lies against it, when no one in-

to them; and, indeed, the very exceptions that are put in, are so frivolous that they carry a plain confession there is nothing colourable to be said. Yea, and most evident it

stance can be given, among them that professedly gave up themselves to its only guidance, of any one, that granting the immortality of the soul, and its separableness from its terrestrial body, ever denied the immediate blessedness of good souls in that state of separation. Nor (if we look into the thing itself) is it at all more unapprehensible that the soul should be independent on the body in its operations than in its existence. If it be possible enough to form an unexceptionable notion of a spiritual being distinct and separable from any corporeal substance, (which the learned Doctor More hath sufficiently demonstrated in his treatise of the Immortality of the Soul,) with its proper attributes, and powers peculiar to itself: what can reasonably withhold me from asserting, that being separate from the body, it may as well operate alone, (I mean exert such operations as are proper to such a being,) as exist alone? That we find it here *de facto*, in its present state, acting only with dependence on a body, will no more infer, that it can act no otherwise, than its present existence in a body will that it can never exist out of it, neither whereof amounts to more than the trifling exploded argument *a non esse ad non posse*, and would be as good sense as to say, Such a one walks in his clothes, therefore out of them he cannot move a foot. Yea, and the very use itself which the soul now makes of corporeal organs and instruments, plainly evidences, that it doth exert some action wherein they assist it not. For it supposes an operation upon them antecedent to any operation by them. Nothing can be the instrument which is not first the subject of my action; as when I use a pen, I act upon it in order to my action by it, *i. e.* I impress a motion upon it, in order whereunto I use not that or any other such instrument; and though I cannot produce the designed effect, leave such characters so and so figured, without it; my hand can yet, without it, perform its own action, proper to itself, and produce many nobler effects. When, therefore, the soul makes use of a bodily organ, its action upon it must needs at last be without the ministry of any organ, unless you multiply to it body upon body *in infinitum*. And if, possibly, it perform not some meaner and grosser pieces of drudgery when out of the body, wherein it made use of its help and service before; that is no more a disparagement or diminution, than it is to the magistrate, that law and decency permit him not to apprehend or execute a malefactor with his own hand. It may yet perform those operations which are proper to itself: that is, such as are more noble and excellent, and immediately conducive to its own felicity. Which sort of actions, as cogitation for instance, and dilection, though being done in the body, there is conjunct with them an agitation of the spirits in the brain and heart; it yet seems to me more reasonable, that as to those acts, the spirits are rather subjects than instruments at all of them; that the whole essence of these acts is antecedent to the motion of the spirits; and that motion certainly (but accidentally) consequent, only by reason of the present, but soluble, union the soul hath with the body. And that the purity and refinedness of those spirits doth only remove what would hinder such acts, rather than contribute positively thereto. And so little is the alliance between a thought, and any bodily thing, even those very finest spirits themselves; that I dare say whoever acts himself closely and strictly to consider and debate the matter with his own faculties, will find it much more easily apprehensible how the acts of intellection and volition may be performed without those very corporeal spirits than by them. However, suppose them never so indispensably necessary to those more noble operations of the soul, it may easily be furnished with them, and in greater plenty and purity, from the ambient air, (or æther,) than from a dull, torpid body; with some part of which air, if we suppose it to contract a vital union, I know no rational principle that is wronged by the supposition, though neither do I know any that can necessarily infer it. As therefore the doctrine of the soul's activity out of this earthly body, hath favour and friendship enough from philosophers; so I doubt not, but upon the most strict and rigid disquisition, it would be as much befriended (or rather righted) by philosophy itself; and that their reason would afford it as direct, and more considerable defence, than their authority.

In the meantime, it deserves to be considered with some resentment, that this doctrine should find the generality of learned pagans more forward advocates than some learned and worthy patrons of the Christian faith; which

is from those texts, not only that holy souls sleep not, in that state of separation; but that they are awaked by it, (as out of a former sleep,) into a much more lively and vigorous activity than they enjoyed before; and translated into a state as much better than their former, as the tortures of a cross are more ungrateful than the pleasures of a paradise; these joys fuller of vitality, than those sickly dying faintings; as the immediate presence and close embraces of the Lord of life, are more delectable than a mournful disconsolate absence from him, (which the apostle therefore tells us he desired as far better, and with an emphasis which our English too faintly expresses: for he uses a double comparative, πολλῷ μᾶλλον κρεῖσσον—*by much more better;*) and, as a perfected, *i. e.* a crowned triumphant spirit, that hath attained the end of its race, (as the words import in the agonistical[p] notion,) is now in a more vivid joyous state, than when, lately, toiling in a tiresome way, it languished under many imperfections. And it is observable, that in the three former scriptures, that phrase, of being with Christ, or, being present with him, is the same which is used by the apostle, (1 Thess. iv. 17.) to express the state of blessedness after the resurrection; intimating plainly, the sameness of the blessedness before and after. And though this phrase be also used to signify the present enjoyment saints have of God's gracious presence in this life; which is also in nature and kind the same; yet it is plainly used in these scriptures (the two latter more especially) to set out to us such a degree of that blessedness, that in comparison thereof, our present being with Christ is a not-being with him; our presence with him now, an absence from him: While we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord, and, I am in a strait betwixt two, desiring to depart, (or having a desire unto dissolution,) and to be with Christ, &c. How strangely mistaken and disappointed had the blessed apostle been, had his absence from the body, his dissolution,

is only imputable to the undue measure and excess of an otherwise just zeal, in these latter, for the resurrection of the body; so far transporting them, that they became willing to let go one truth, that they might hold another the faster; and to ransom this at the too dear (and unnecessary) expense of the former: accounting, they could never make sure enough the resurrection of the body, without making the soul's dependance on it so absolute and necessary, that it should be able to do nothing but sleep in the meanwhile. Whereas it seems a great deal more unconceivable, how such a being as the soul is, once quit of the entanglements and encumbrances of the body, should sleep at all, than how it should act without the body.

[p] See Dr. Hammond's Annot. in loc.

his release, set him further off from Christ, or made him less capable of converse with him, than before he was!—And how absurd would it be to say, the spirits of the just are perfected, by being cast into a stupifying sleep; yea, or being put into any state, not better than they were in before! But their state is evidently far better. The body of death is now laid aside, and the weights of sin, that did so easily beset, are shaken off; flesh and sin are laid down together; the soul is rid of its burthensome bands and shackles, hath quitted its filthy darksome prison, (the usual place of laziness and sloth,) is come forth of its drowsy dormitory, and the glory of God is risen upon it. 'Tis now come into the world of realities, where things appear as they are, no longer as in a dream, or vision of the night. The vital quickening beams of Divine light are darting in upon it on every side, and turning it into their own likeness. The shadows of the evening are vanished, and fled away. It converses with no objects but what are full themselves, and most apt to replenish it with energy and life. This cannot be but a joyful awaking, a blessed season of satisfaction and delight indeed, to the enlightened, revived soul. But,

II. It must be acknowledged, the further and more eminent season of this blessedness will be the general resurrection day, which is more expressly signified in Scripture by this term of *awaking;* as is manifest in many plain texts,[t] where 'tis either expressly thus used, or implied to have this meaning in the opposite sense of the word sleep. What additions shall then be made to the saints blessedness, lies more remote from our apprehension; inasmuch as Scripture states not the degree of that blessedness which shall intervene. We know, by a too sad instructive experience, the calamities of our present state, and can therefore more easily conceive, wherein it is capable of betterment, by the deposition of a sluggish, cumbersome body, where those calamities mostly have their spring: but then we know less where to fix our foot, or whence to take our rise, in estimating the additional felicities of that future state, when both the states to be compared are so unknown to us. But that there will be great additions is plain enough. The full recompense of obedience and devotedness to Christ, of foregoing all for him, is affixed by his promise to the resurrection of the just; The judg-

t Dan. xii. 2. John xiv. 19. 2 Cor. xv. 2 Thess. iv. &c.

ment-day gives every one his portion according to his works. Then must the holy, obedient christian hear from his Redeemer's mouth, Come ye blessed of the father, inherit the kingdom, &c. Till then the devils think their torment to be before their time. 'Tis when he shall appear we shall be like him, and see him as he is. That noted day is the day of being presented faultless with exceeding joy. And divers things there are obviously enough to be reflected on, which cannot but be understood to contribute much to the increase and improvement of this inchoate blessedness. The acquisition of a glorified body. For our vile bodies shall be so far transfigured, as to be made like [u] [conform to] the glorious body of the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: and this shall be when he shall appear from heaven, where saints here below are required to have their commerce, as the enfranchised citizens thereof, and from whence they are to continue looking for him in the meantime. When he terminates and puts a period to that expectation of his saints on earth, then shall that great change be made, *i. e.* when he actually appears, at which time the trumpet sounds, [x] and even sleeping dust itself awakes; the hallowed dust of them that slept in Jesus first, who are then to come with him. This change may well be conceived to add considerably to their felicity. A natural congruity and appetite is now answered and satisfied, which did either lie dormant, or was under somewhat an anxious restless expectation before; neither of which could well consist with a state of blessedness, every way already perfect. And that there is a real desire and expectation of this change, seems to be plainly intimated in those words of Job, [y] All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come; where he must rather be understood to speak of the resurrection than of death; (as his words are commonly mistaken, and misapplied;) as will appear by setting down the context from the seventh verse, for there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground: yet through the scent of water, it will bud and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth, and

u Μετασχηματισει, συμμορφον. Phil. iii. 20, 21.
x 1 Thess. iv. 14, 15, 16. y Chap. xiv. 14.

drieth up; so man lieth down, and raiseth not till the heavens be no more: they shall not be awakened nor raised out of their sleep. O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret till thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee; thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hands. He first speaks according to common apprehension, and sensible appearance, touching the hopeless state of man in death; as though it were less capable of reparation than that of some inferior creatures, unto the end of ver. 10. And then gradually discovers his better hope; betrays this faith, as it were, obliquely, touching this point; lets it break out, first, in some obscure glimmerings, (ver. 11, 12.) giving us, in his *protasis*, a similitude not fully expressive of his seeming meaning, for waters and floods that fail may be renewed; and in his *apodosis* more openly intimating, man's sleep should be only till the heavens were no more: which *till* might be supposed to signify *never*, were it not for what follows, ver. 13, where he expressly speaks his confidence by way of petition, that at a set and appointed time, God would remember him, so as to recall him out of the grave: and at last, being now minded to speak out more fully, puts the question to himself, If a man die, shall he live again? and answers it, All the days of my appointed time, *i. e.* of that appointed time which he mentioned before, when God should revive him out of the dust, will I wait till my change come; *i. e.* that glorious change, when the corruption of a loathsome grave should be exchanged for immortal glory; which he amplifies, and utters more expressly, ver. 15. Thou shalt call, and I will answer; thou shalt have a desire to the work of thy hands: Thou wilt not always forget to restore and perfect thy own creature.

And surely that waiting is not the act of his inanimate sleeping dust; but though it be spoken of the person totally gone into *hades*, into the invisible state, 'tis to be understood of that part that should be capable of such an action; *q. d.* I, in that part that shall be still alive, shall patiently await thy appointed time of reviving me in that part also, which death and the grave shall insult over (in a temporary triumph) in the meantime; and so will the

words carry a facile commodious sense, without the unnecessary help of an imagined rhetorical scheme of speech. And then, that this waiting carries in it a desirous expectation of some additional good, is evident at first sight; which therefore must needs add to the satisfaction and blessedness of the expecting soul. And wherein it may do so, is not altogether unapprehensible. Admit, that a spirit, had it never been embodied, might be as well without a body, or that it might be as well provided of a body out of other materials; 'tis no unreasonable supposition, that a connate aptitude to a body, should render human souls more happy in a body sufficiently attempered to their most noble operations. And how much doth relation and propriety endear things, otherwise mean and inconsiderable? Or why should it be thought strange, that a soul connaturalized to matter, should be more particularly inclined to a particular portion thereof? so as that it should appropriate such a part, and say 'tis mine? And will it not be a pleasure, to have a vitality diffused through what even more remotely appertains to me, to have every thing belonging to the *suppositum* perfectly vindicated from the tyrannous dominion of death? The returning of the spirits into a benumbed or sleeping toe or finger, adds a contentment to a man which he wanted before. Nor is it hence necessary the soul should covet a re-union with every effluvious particle of its former body: a desire implanted by God in a reasonable soul will aim at what is convenient, not what shall be cumbersome or monstrous. And how pleasant will it be to contemplate and admire the wisdom and power of the great Creator in this so glorious a change, when I shall find a clod of earth, a heap of dust, refined into a celestial purity and brightness! [z] when what was sown in corruption shall be raised in incorruption; what was sown in dishonour, is raised in glory; what was sown in weakness, is raised in power; what was sown a natural body, is raised a spiritual body! when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality, and death be wholly swallowed up in victory! So that this awaking may well be understood to carry that in it, which may bespeak it the proper season of the saints' consummate satisfaction and blessedness. But besides what it carries in itself, there are other (more extrinsical) concurrents that do farther signalize this sea-

z 1 Cor. xv.

son, and import a greater increase of blessedness then to God's holy ones. The body of Christ is now completed, the fulness of him that filleth all in all, and all the so nearly related parts cannot but partake in the perfection and reflected glory of the whole. There is joy in heaven at the conversion of one sinner, though he have a troublesome scene yet to pass over afterwards, in a tempting, wicked, unquiet world; how much more when the many sons shall be all brought to glory together! The designs are all now accomplished, and wound up into the most glorious result and issue, whereof the Divine Providence had been, as in travail, for so many thousand years. 'Tis now seen how exquisite wisdom governed the world, and how steady a tendency the most intricate and perplexed methods of Providence had, to one stated and most worthy end. Specially the constitution, administration, and ends of the Mediator's kingdom, are now beheld in their exact aptitudes, order, and conspicuous glory; when so blessed an issue and success shall commend and crown the whole undertaking. The Divine authority is now universally acknowledged and adored; his justice is vindicated and satisfied; his grace demonstrated and magnified to the uttermost. The whole assembly of saints solemnly acquitted by public sentence, presented spotless and without blemish to God, and adjudged to eternal blessedness. 'Tis the day of solemn triumph and jubilation, upon the finishing of all God's works, from the creation of the world wherein the Lord Jesus[a] appears to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all that believe: upon which ensues the resignation of the Mediator's kingdom,[b] (all the ends of it being now attained,) that the Father himself may be immediately all in all. How aptly then are the fuller manifestations of God, the more glorious display of all his attributes, the larger and more abundant effusions of himself, reserved (as the best wine to the last) unto this joyful day! Created perfections could not have been before so absolute, but they might admit of improvement; their capacities not so large, but they might be extended further; and then who can doubt but that divine communications may also have a proportionable increase, and that upon the concourse of so many great occasions they shall have so?

a 2 Thess. i. 10. b 1 Cor. xv. 28.

CHAPTER XI.

An introduction to the use of the doctrine hitherto proposed. The use divided into inferences of truth, Rules of duty. 1. Inference, That blessedness consists not in any sensual enjoyment. 2. Inference, The spirit of man (since 'tis capable of so high a blessedness) is a being of high excellency.

Use. And now is our greatest work yet behind; the improvement of so momentous a truth, to the affecting and transforming of hearts; that (if the Lord shall so far vouchsafe his assistance and blessing) they may taste the sweetness, feel the power, and bear the impress and image of it. This is the work, both of greatest necessity, difficulty, and excellency, and unto which, all that hath been done hitherto, is but subservient and introductive. Give me leave, therefore, reader, to stop thee here, and demand of thee ere thou go further; hast thou any design, in turning over these leaves, of bettering thy spirit, of getting a more refined, heavenly temper of soul? Art thou weary of thy dross and earth, and longing for the first fruits, the beginnings of glory? Dost thou wish for a soul meet for the blessedness hitherto described? What is here written is designed for thy help and furtherance. But if thou art looking on these pages with a wanton rolling eye, hunting for novelties, or what may gratify a prurient wit, a coy and squeamish fancy; go read a romance, or some piece of drollery: know here's nothing for thy turn;[a] and dread to meddle with matters of everlasting concernment without a serious spirit; read not another line till thou have sighed out this request, "Lord, keep me from trifling with the things of eternity." Charge thy soul to consider, that what thou art now reading must be added to thy account against the great day. 'Tis amazing to think, with what vanity of mind the most weighty things of religion are entertained amongst Christians. Things that should swallow up our souls, drink up our spirits, are heard as a tale that is told, disregarded by most, scorned by too many. What can be spoken so important, or of so tremendous consequence, or of so confessed truth, or with so awful solemnity and premised mention of the sacred name of

[a] Dissoluti est pectoris in rebus seriis quærere voluptatem. Arnob.

the Lord, as not to find either a very slight entertainment or contemptuous rejection; and this by persons avowing themselves Christians? We seem to have little or no advantage, in urging men upon their own principles, and with things they most readily and professedly assent to. Their hearts are as much untouched, and void of impression by the Christian doctrine, as if they were of another religion. How unlike is the Christian world to the Christian doctrine! The seal is fair and excellent, but the impression is languid, or not visible. Where is that serious godliness, that heavenliness, that purity, that spirituality, that righteousness, that peace, unto which the Christian religion is most aptly designed to work and form the spirits of men? We think to be saved by an empty name; and glory in the show and appearance of that, the life and power whereof we hate and deride. 'Tis a reproach with us not to be called a Christian, and a greater reproach to be one. If such and such doctrines obtain not in our professed belief, we are heretics or infidels; if they do in our practice, we are precisians and fools. To be so serious, and circumspect, and strict, and holy, to make the practice of godliness so much our business, as the known and avowed principles of our religion do plainly exact from us, (yea, though we come, as we cannot but do, unspeakably short of that required measure,) is to make one's self a common derision and scorn. Not to be professedly religious is barbarous, to be so in good earnest ridiculous. In other things men are wont to act and practise according to the known rules of their several callings and professions, and he would be reckoned the common fool of the neighbourhood that should not do so; the husbandman that should sow when others reap, or contrive his harvest into the depth of winter, or sow fitches and expect to reap wheat; the merchant that should venture abroad his most precious commodities in a leaky bottom, without pilot or compass, or to places not likely to afford him any valuable return. In religion only it must be accounted absurd, to be and do according to its known, agreed principles, and he a fool that shall but practise as all about him profess to believe. Lord! whence is this apprehended inconsistency between the profession and practice of religion? What hath thus stupified and unmanned the world, that seriousness in religion should be thought the character of a fool? that men must visibly make a mockery of the most funda-

mental articles of faith only to save their reputation, and be afraid to be serious lest they should be thought mad? Were the doctrine here opened believed in earnest, were the due proper impress of it upon our spirits, or, (as the pagan moralist's expression is,[b]) were our minds transfigured into it, what manner of persons should we be in all holy conversation and godliness? But 'tis thought enough to have it in our creed, though never in our hearts; and such as will not deride the holiness it should produce, yet endeavour it not, nor go about to apply and urge truths upon their own souls to any such purpose. What should turn into grace and spirit and life, turns all into notion and talk; and men think all is well if their heads be filled and their tongues tipt with what should transform their souls and govern their lives. How are the most awful truths, and that should have greatest power upon men's spirits, trifled with as matters only of speculation and discourse! They are heard but as empty airy words, and presently evaporate, pass away into words again; like food (as [c]Seneca speaks) *that comes up presently, the same that it was taken in; which* (as he saith) *profits not, nor makes any accession to the body at all. A like case,* (as another ingeniously speaks,[d]) *as if sheep, when they had been feeding, should present their shepherds with the very grass itself which they had cropt, and show how much they had eaten.* No, saith he, *they concoct it, and so yield them wool and milk.* And so, saith he, do not you (*viz.* when you have been instructed) presently go and utter words among the more ignorant, (meaning they should not do so in a way of ostentation, to show how much they knew more than others,) "but works that follow upon the concoction of what hath been by words made known to them." Let Christians be ashamed that they need this instruction from heathen teachers.

Thy words were found and I did eat them, (saith the prophet,) and thy word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart. Divine truth is only so far at present grateful, or useful for future, as 'tis received by faith and consider-

b Scientiam qui didicit, et facienda et vitanda præcepit, nondum sapiens est, nisi in ea quæ didicit transfiguratus est animus.

c Non prodest cibus, nec corpori accedit, qui statim sumptus emittitur. Sen. Epist.

d Ὅπει και τα προβατα, ου χορτον φεροντα τοις ποιμεσιν επιδεικνυει ποσον εφαγεν, αλλα την νομην εσω πεψαντα, εριον εξω φερει και γαλα και συ τοινυν; μη ταχεως ρηματα τοις ιδιωταις επιδεικνυε, αλλα απ' αυτων πεφθεντων τα εργα. Epictet.

ation, and in the love thereof, into the very heart, and there turned in *succum et sanguinem—into real nutriment to the soul;* so shall man live by the word of God. Hence is the application of it (both personal and ministerial) of so great necessity. If the truths of the gospel were of the same alloy with some parts of philosophy, whose end is attained as soon as they are known; if the Scripture doctrine (the whole entire system of it) were not a doctrine after godliness, if it were not designed to sanctify and make men holy; or if the hearts of men did not reluctate, were easily receptive of its impressions; our work were as soon done as such a doctrine were nakedly proposed: but the state of the case in these respects is known and evident. The tenour and aspect of gospel truth speaks its end; and experience too plainly speaks the oppositeness of men's spirits. All therefore we read and hear is lost if it be not urgently applied: the Lord grant it be not then too. Therefore, reader, let thy mind and heart concur in the following improvement of this doctrine, which will be wholly comprehended under these two heads,—Inferences of truth, and—Rules of duty,—that are consequent and connatural thereto.

1. Inferences of truth deducible from it.

1. Infer. True blessedness consists not in any sensual enjoyment. The blessedness of a man can be but one; most only one. He can have but one highest and best good. And its proper character is, that it finally satisfies and gives rest to his spirit. This the face and likeness of God doth; his glory beheld and participated. Here then alone his full blessedness must be understood to lie. Therefore as this might many other ways be evinced to be true; so it evidently appears to be the proper issue of the present truth, and is plainly proved by it. But, alas! it needs a great deal more to be pressed than proved. O that it were but as much considered as it is known! The experience of almost six thousand years, hath (one would think sufficiently) testified the incompetency of every worldly thing to make men happy; that the present pleasing of our senses, and the gratification of our animal part, is not blessedness; that men are still left unsatisfied notwithstanding. But the practice and course of the world are such, as if this were some late and rare experiment; which (for curiosity) every one must be trying over again. Every age renews the inquiry after an earthly felicity; the design is entailed, (as the Spanish designs are said to be,)

and reinforced with as great a confidence and vigour from age to age, as if none had been baffled or defeated in it before; or that they were very likely to take at last. Had this been the alone folly of the first age, it had admitted some excuse; but that the world should still be cheated by the same so oft repeated impostures, presents us with a sad prospect of the deplorable state of mankind.[e] This their way is their folly, yet their posterity approve, &c. The wearied wits and wasted estates, laid out upon the philosopher's stone, afford but a faint, defective representation of this case. What chemistry can extract heaven out of a clod of clay? What art can make blessedness spring and grow out of this cold earth? If all created nature be vexed and tortured never so long, who can expect this elixir? Yet after so many frustrated attempts, so much time and strength and labour lost, men are still as eagerly and vainly busy as ever; are perpetually tossed by unsatisfied desires, labouring in the fire, wearying themselves for very vanity, distracted by the uncertain, and often contrary, motions of a ravenous appetite, and a blind mind, that would be happy and knows not how. With what sounding bowels, with what compassionate tears, should the state of mankind be lamented by all that understand the worth of a soul! What serious heart doth not melt and bleed for miserable men, that are (through a just nemesis[f]) so perpetually mocked with shadows, cheated with false delusive appearances, infatuated and betrayed by their own senses. They walk but in a vain show, disquieting themselves in vain; their days flee away as a shadow, their strength is only labour and sorrow; while they rise up early and lie down late, to seek rest in trouble, and life in death. They run away from blessedness while they pretend to pursue it, and suffer themselves to be led down without regret to perdition, "as an ox to the slaughter, and a fool to the correction of the stocks, till a dart strikes through their liver:" descend patiently to the chambers of death, not so much as once thinking, whither are we going? dream of nothing but an earthly paradise, till they find themselves amidst the infernal regions.

2. Infer. The spirit of man, inasmuch as 'tis capable of such a blessedness, appears an excellent creature.[g] Its na-

[e] Psalm xlix.

[f] Ira Dei est ista vita mortalis, ubi homo vanitati similis factus est, et dies ejus velut umbra prætereunt, &c. Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 22. c. 24.

[g] Not that this blessedness can be attained by mere human endeavours, (more whereof see under the next inference,) but there is an inclination, a certain *pon-*

tural capacity is supposed; for the Psalmist speaks of his own numerical person, the same that then writ; I shall behold; shall be satisfied: take away this *suppositum*, and it could not be so said: or as in Job's words; I shall behold him, and not another for me; it would certainly be another, not the same. Judge hence the excellency of a human soul (the principal subject of this blessedness) without addition of any new natural powers; 'tis capable of the vision of God; of partaking unto satisfaction the Divine likeness. And is not that an excellent creature, that is capable not only of surveying the creation of God, passing through the several ranks and orders of created beings; but of ascending to the Being of beings, of contemplating the Divine excellencies, of beholding the bright and glorious face of the blessed God himself; till it have looked itself into his very likeness, and have his entire image inwrought into it. The dignity then of the spirit of man is not to be estimated by the circumstances of its present state, as 'tis here clad with a sordid flesh, inwrapped in darkness, and grovelling in the dust of the earth: but consider the improvableness of its natural powers and faculties; the high perfections it may attain, and the foundations of how glorious a state are laid in its very nature. And then who can tell, whether its possible advancement is more to be admired, or its present calamity deplored. Might this consideration be permitted to settle and fix itself in the hearts of men; could any thing be so grievous to them, as their so vast distance from such an attainable blessedness; or any thing be so industriously avoided, so earnestly abhorred, as that viler dejection and abasement of themselves: when they are so low already by Divine disposition, to descend lower by their own wickedness; when they are already fallen as low as earth, to precipitate themselves as low as hell. How generous a disdain should that thought raise in men's spirits, of that vile servitude to which they have subjected themselves, a servitude to brutal lusts, to sensual inclinations and desires; as if the highest happiness they did project to themselves were the satisfaction of these? Would they not with an heroic scorn turn away their eyes from

deus naturæ, (as some school-men speak,) by which it propends towards it; or there is the *radix*, or *fundamentum*, or *capacitas*, (as some others,) *i. e.* that it not only may receive it; but that it may be elevated by grace, actively to concur, by its natural powers, as vital principles towards the attainment of it, according to that known saying of Saint Augustine, *Posse credere naturæ est hominis, &c.*

beholding vanity, did they consider their own capacity of beholding the Divine glory? could they satisfy themselves to become [h] like the beasts that perish, did they think of being satisfied with the likeness of God? And who can conceive unto what degree this aggravates the sin of man, that he so little minds (as it will their misery, that shall fall short of) this blessedness! They had spirits capable of it. Consider, thou sensual man, whose happiness lies in colours, and tastes, and sounds, (as the moralist ingeniously speaks,) that herdest thyself with brute creatures, and aimest no higher than they; as little lookest up, and art as much a stranger to the thoughts and desires of heaven: thy creation did not set thee so low; they are where they were; but thou art fallen from thy excellency. God did not make thee a brute creature, but thou thyself. Thou hast yet a spirit about thee, that might understand its own original, and alliance to the Father of spirits; that hath a designation in its nature to higher converses and employments. Many myriads of such spirits, of no higher original excellency than thy own, are now in the presence of the highest Majesty; are prying into the Eternal glory, contemplating the perfections of the Divine nature, beholding the unvailed face of God, which transfuses upon them its own satisfying likeness. Thou art not so low-born, but thou mightest attain this state also. That sovereign Lord and Author of all things calls thee to it; his goodness invites thee, his authority enjoins thee, to turn thy thoughts and designs this way. Fear not to be thought immodest or presumptuous: 'tis but a dutiful ambition; an obedient aspiring. Thou art under a law to be thus happy; nor doth it bind thee to any natural impossibility; it designs instructions to thee, not delusion; guidance, not mockery. When thou art required to apply and turn thy soul to this blessedness, 'tis not the same thing as if thou wert bidden to remove a mountain, to pluck down a star, or create a world. Thou art here put upon nothing but what is agreeable to the primeval nature of man; and though it be to a vast height, thou must ascend: 'tis by so easy and familiar methods, by so apt gradations, that thou will be sensible of no

[h] Voluptas bonum pecoris est——Hunc tu (non dico inter viros sed) inter homines numeras? cujus summum bonum saporibus, ac coloribus, ac sonis constat? excedat ex hoc animalium numero pulcherrimo, ac diis secundo; mutis aggregetur animal pabulo natum. Sen. Ep. 92.

[i] Hic Deos aequat, illo tendit, originis suae memor. Nemo, improbe, eo conatur ascendere unde descenderat—socii eis summus et membra, &c. Sen. Ep. 92.

violence done to thy nature in all thy way. Do but make some trials with thyself; thou wilt soon find nothing is the hinderance but an unwilling heart. Try however (which will suffice to let thee discern thy own capacity, and will be a likely means to make thee willing) how far thou canst understand and trace the way (complying with it at least as reasonable) that leads to this blessedness. Retire a little into thyself; forget awhile thy relation to this sensible world; summon in thy self-reflecting and considering powers: thou wilt presently perceive thou art not already happy, thou art in some part unsatisfied; and thence wilt easily understand, inasmuch as thou art not happy in thyself, that it must be something, as yet without thee, must make thee so: and nothing can make thee happy, but what is in that respect better than thyself; or hath some perfection in it, which thou findest wanting in thyself. A little further discourse or reasoning with thyself, will easily persuade thee, thou hast something better about thee than that luggage of flesh thou goest with to and fro; for thou well knowest, that [k] is not capable of reason and discourse: and that the power of doing so is a higher perfection than any thou canst entitle it to; and that therefore, besides thy bulky, material part, thou must have such a thing as a spirit or soul belonging to thee, to which that, and thy other perfections, not compatible to gross matter, may agree. Thou wilt readily assent, that thou canst never be happy, while thy better and more noble part is unsatisfied; and that it can only be satisfied with something suitable and connatural to it. That therefore thy happiness must lie in something more excellent than this material or sensible world, otherwise it cannot be grateful and suitable to thy soul, yea, in something that may be better, and more excellent than thy soul itself, otherwise how can it better and perfect that.[l] As thou canst not but acknowledge thy soul to be spiritual and immaterial, so if thou attend thou wilt soon see cause to acknowledge a spiritual or immaterial being, better and more perfect than thy own soul. For its perfections were not self-originate, they were therefore derived from something, for that reason confessedly more

k Λογισμος δε και νους, ουκετι ταυτα σωματι διδωσιν αυτα, και γαρ εργον αυτων ου δι οργανων τελειται του σωματος εμποδιον γαρ τουτο, ειτις αυτω εν ταις σκεψεσι προχρωτο. Plotin. Ennead. 4. lib. 3.

l Sicut non est ac arne, sed super carnem, quod carnem facit vivere: sic non est ab homme, sed super hominem, quod hominem, facit beate vivere. D. Aug. de Civit. Dei, lib. 19. c. 25.

excellent; whence at last also thou wilt find it unavoidably imposed upon thee, to apprehend and adore a Being absolutely perfect, and than which there cannot be a more perfect; the first subject and common fountain of all perfections, which hath them underived in himself, and can derive them unto inferior created beings.[m] Upon this eternal and self-essential Being, the infinitely blessed God, thou necessarily dependest, and owest therefore constant subjection and obedience to him. Thou hast indeed offended him, and art thereby cut off from all interest in him, and intercourse with him; but he hath proclaimed in his gospel, his willingness to be reconciled, and that through the sufferings, righteousness, and intercession of his only-begotten Son, thy merciful Redeemer, the way is open for thy restitution and recovery; that thou mayst partake from him whatever perfection is wanting to thy blessedness. Nothing is required from thee in order hereunto, but that, relying on and submitting to thy Redeemer's gracious conduct, thou turn thy mind and heart towards thy God, to know him, and conform to him; to view and imitate the Divine perfections; the faithful endeavour and inchoation whereof, will have this issue and reward, the clear vision and full participation of them. So that the way and work differ not, in nature and kind, from thy end and reward; thy duty from thy blessedness. Nor are either repugnant to the natural constitution of thy own soul. What violence is there done to reasonable nature in all this? or what can hinder thee herein, but a most culpably averse and wicked heart? Did thy reason ever turn off thy soul from God? was it not thy corruption only? What vile images dost thou receive from earthly objects, which deform thy soul, while thou industriously avertest thy Maker's likeness that would perfect it! How full is thy mind and heart of vanity! how empty of God! Were this through natural incapacity, thou wert an innocent creature; it were thy infelicity, (negative I mean,) not thy crime; and must be resolved into the sovereign will of thy Creator, not thy own disobedient will. But when this shall appear the true state of thy case, and thou shalt hear it from the mouth

m Ut in ordine causarum efficientium, ita et in gradibus virtutis et perfectionis, non datur progressus in infinitum: sed oportet sit aliqua prima et summa perfectio: Pet. Molin. de cognitione Dei. Not to insist upon what hath been much urged by learned men of former and latter (yea, and of the present) time,—that whosoever denies the existence of an absolute perfect being, contradicts himself in the denial, inasmuch as necessity of existence is included in the very subject of the negation,—some accounting it sophism, and it being unseasonable here to discuss it.

of thy Judge, "Thou didst not like to retain me in thy knowledge or love; thou hadst reason and will to use about meaner objects, but none for me; thou couldst sometimes have spared me a glance, a cast of thine eye at least, when thou didst rather choose it should be in the ends of the earth: a thought of me had cost thee as little, might as soon have been thought, as of this or that vanity; but thy heart was not with me. I banish thee, therefore, that presence which thou never lovedst. I deny thee the vision thou didst always shun, and the impression of my likeness which thou didst ever hate. I eternally abandon thee to the darkness and deformities which were ever grateful to thee. Thine is a self-created hell; the fruit of thy own choice; no invitations or persuasions of mine could keep thee from it." How wilt thou excuse thy fault, or avert thy doom! what arguments or apologies shall defend thy cause against these pleadings? Nay, what armour shall defend thy soul against its own wounding self-reflections hereupon? when every thought shall be a dart; and a convicted conscience an ever-gnawing worm, a fiery serpent with endless involutions ever winding about thy heart?

It will now be sadly thought on, how often thou sawest thy way and declinedst it; knewest thy duty and didst waive it; understoodest thy interest and didst slight it; approvedst the things that were more excellent, and didst reject them. How often thou didst prevaricate with thy light, and run counter to thine own eyes; while things, confessedly most worthy of thy thoughts and pursuits, were overlooked, and empty shadows eagerly pursued. Thy own heart will now feelingly tell thee, it was not want of capacity, but inclination, that cut thee off from blessedness. Thou wilt now bethink thyself, that when life and immortality were brought to light before thy eyes in the gospel, and thou wast told of this future blessedness of the saints, and pressed to follow holiness, as without which thou couldst not see God; it was a reasonable man was spoken to, that had a power to understand, and judge, and choose; not a stone or a brute. Thy capacity of this blessedness makes thee capable also of the most exquisite torment; and reflected on, actually infers it. How passionately, but vainly, wilt thou then cry out, "O that I had filled up the place of any the meanest creature throughout the whole creation of God, that I had been a gnat, or a fly, or had never been, rather than to have so noble,

abused powers eternally to reckon for! Yea, and thou must reckon for not only the actual light and good impressions thou hadst, but even all thou wast capable of and mightest have attained. Thou shalt now recount with anguish and horror (and rend thy own soul with the thoughts) what thou mightest now have been; how excellent and glorious a creature! hadst thou not contrived thy own misery, and conspired with the devil against thyself, how to deform and destroy thy own soul. While this remembrance shall always afresh return, that nothing was enjoined thee as a duty, or propounded as thy blessedness, but what thou wast made capable of; and that it was not fatal necessity, but a wilful choice, made thee miserable.

CHAPTER XII.

Inference 3. That a change of heart is necessary to this blessedness. The pretences of ungodly men, whereby they would avoid the necessity of this change. Five considerations proposed in order to the detecting the vanity of such pretences. A particular discussion and refutation of those pretences.

3. 'Tis a mighty change must pass upon the souls of men in order to their enjoyment of this blessedness. This equally follows from the consideration of the nature and substantial parts of it, as of the qualifying righteousness pre-required to it. A little reflection upon the common state and temper of men's spirits, will soon enforce an acknowledgment that the vision of God, and conformity to him, are things above their reach, and which they are never likely to take satisfaction in, or at all to savour, till they become otherwise disposed than before the renovating change they are. The text expresses no more in stating the qualified subject of this blessedness *in righteousness*, than it evidently implies in the account it gives of this blessedness itself, that it lies in seeing God, and being satisfied with his likeness. As soon as it is considered, that the blessedness of souls is stated here, what can be a more obvious reflection than this; Lord, then how great a change must they undergo! What, such souls be blessed in seeing and partaking the divine likeness, that never loved it! were so much his enemies! 'Tis true they are

naturally capable of it, which speaks their original excellency; but they are morally uncapable, *i. e.* indisposed and averse, which as truly, and most sadly speaks, their present vileness; and the sordid, abject temper they now are of. They are destitute of no natural powers necessary to the attainment of this blessedness; but in the mean time have them so[a] depraved by impure and vicious tinctures, that they cannot relish it, or the means to it. They have reasonable souls, furnished with intellective and elective faculties, but labouring under a manifold distemper and disaffection; that they[b] cannot receive, they cannot savour, the things of God, or what is spiritual. They want the εὐθεσία, (as we express it,) the well-disposedness for the kingdom of God, intimated Luke ix. 62. the ἱκανότης, the meetness, the aptitude, or idoneity for the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. i. 12.

A settled aversion from God hath fastened its roots in the very spirits of their minds; (for that is stated[c] as the prime subject of the change to be made;) and how can they take pleasure in the vision and participation of his glory? Whereas by beholding the glory of the Lord, they should be changed into the same image; a veil is upon the heart till it turn to the Lord, as was said concerning the Jews, 2 Cor. iii. 14. The God of this world hath blinded their minds, lest (that transforming light) the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them, chap. iv. 4. They are alienated[d] from the life of God, through their ignorance and blindness of heart. The life they choose is to be ἄθεοι ἐν κόσμῳ, atheists, or[e] without God in the world. They like not to retain God in their knowledge, are willingly ignorant of him, say to him, "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if any will understand, if any will seek after God; and the result of the inquiry is, there is none that doth good, no not one. They are[f] haters of God, as our Saviour accused the Jews, and Saint Paul the Gentiles;[g] are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Their understandings are dark, their minds vain, their wills obstinate, their consciences seared, their hearts hard

a Capax est noster animus, perfertur illo, si vitia non deprimant. Sen. Epist. 92.
b 1 Cor. ii. 14. Rom. viii. 5.
c Eph. iv. 23. d Eph. iv. 18.
e Chap. ii. 12. Rom. i. 28. 2 Pet. iii. Job xxi. 14. Psal. liii.
f John xv. g Rom. i.

and dead, their lives one continued rebellion against God and a defiance to heaven. At how vast a distance are such souls from such blessedness! The notion and nature of blessedness must sure be changed, or the temper of their spirits. Either they must have new hearts created, or a new heaven, if ever they be happy. And such is the stupid dotage of vain man, he can more easily persuade himself to believe, that the sun itself should be transformed into a dunghill, that the holy God should lay aside his nature, and turn heaven into a place of impure darkness; than that he himself should need to undergo a change. O the powerful infatuation of self-love, that men in the gall of bitterness should think 'tis well with their spirits, and fancy themselves in a case good enough to enjoy divine pleasure; that (as the toad's venom offends not itself) their loathsome wickedness, which all good men detest, is a pleasure to them; and while 'tis as the poison of asps under their lips, they roll it as a dainty bit, revolve it in their thoughts with delight! Their wickedness speaks itself out to the very hearts [h] of others, while it never affects their own; and is found out to be hateful, while they still continue flattering themselves. And because they are without spot in their own eyes; they adventure so high, as to presume themselves so in the pure eyes of God too; and instead of designing to be like God, they already imagine him [i] such a one as themselves. Hence their allotment of time (in the whole of it, the Lord knows, little enough) for the working out of their salvation spends apace; while they do not so much as understand their business. Their measured hour is almost out; an immense eternity is coming on upon them; and lo! they stand as men that cannot find their hands. Urge them to the speedy, serious endeavour of a heart-change, earnestly to intend the business of regeneration, of becoming new creatures; they seem to understand it as little as if they were spoken to in an unknown tongue; and are in the like posture with the confounded builders of Babel, they know not what we mean, or would put them upon. They wonder what we would have them do. "They are (say they) orthodox Christians: they believe all the articles of the Christian creed: they detest all heresy and false doctrine: they are no strangers to the house of God; but diligently attend the enjoined solemnities of public worship: some possibly

[h] Psal. xxvi. 1, 2. [i] Psal. l.

can say, they are sober, just, charitable, peaceable; and others that can boast less of their virtues, yet say, they are sorry for their sins, and pray God to forgive them." And if we urge them concerning their translation from the state of nature to that of grace, their becoming new creatures, their implantation into Christ: they say they have been baptized, and therein regenerate, and what would we have more?

But to how little purpose is it to equivocate with God! to go about to put a fallacy upon the Judge of spirits! or escape the animadversion of his fiery flaming eye! or elude his determinations, and pervert the true intent and meaning of his most established constitutions and laws! Darest thou venture thy soul upon it? that this is all God means, by[k] having a new heart created, a right spirit renewed in us: by being made God's[l] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works; by[m] becoming new creatures, old things being done away, all things made new; by[n] so learning the truth as it is in Jesus, to the putting off the old man, and putting on the new which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness; by[o] being begotten of God's own will by the word of truth, to be (the ἀπαρχὴ) the chief excellency, the prime glory, (as certainly his new creature is his best creature,) the first-fruits, or the devoted part of all his creatures; by[p] having Christ formed in us; by partaking the Divine nature, the incorruptible seed, the seed of God; by being born of God, spirit of Spirit, as of earthly parents we are born flesh of flesh. When my eternal blessedness lies upon it, had I not need to be sure that I hit the true meaning of these scriptures? especially, that at least I fall not below it, and rest not in any thing short of what Scripture makes indispensably necessary to my entering into the kingdom of God? I professedly wave controversies; and 'tis pity so practical a business as this I am now upon, and upon which salvation so much depends, should ever have been encumbered with any controversy. And therefore, though I shall not digress so far, as to undertake a particular and distinct handling here of this work of God upon the soul, yet I shall propound something in general, touching the change necessarily previous to this blessedness, (wherein that necessity is evidenceable from the nature of this blessed-

k Psal li. l Eph. ii. 10.
m 2 Cor. v. 17. n Eph. iv. 23, 24. o Jam. i. 18.
p Gal. iv. 19. 2 Pet. i. iv. 1 Pet. i. John iii. 6.

ness which is the business I have in hand,) that I hope will pass among Christians for acknowledged truth, not liable to dispute, though the Lord knows it be little considered. My design being rather to awaken souls to the consideration of known and agreed things, than to perplex them about unknown. Consider therefore:

First, That the Holy Scriptures, in the forementioned and other like passages, do plainly hold forth the necessity of a real change to be made in the temper and dispositions of the soul; and not a relative only, respecting its state. This cannot be doubted by any that acknowledge a real inherent depravation, propagated in the nature of man. No, nor denied by them that grant such a corruption to be general and continued among men; whether by imitation only, or what way soever. And willing I am to meet men upon their own principles and concessions, however erroneous or short of the truth they may be, while they are yet improvable to their own advantage. Admit that regeneration, or the new-birth includes a change of our relation and state Godward; doth it therefore exclude an intrinsic, subjective change of the inclinations and tendencies of the soul? And if it did, yet other terms are more peculiarly appropriate to, and most expressly point out, this very change alone; as that of conversion, or of turning to God; of being renewed in the spirit of the mind; of putting off the old man that is corrupt by, &c. and putting on the new man, which is created in righteousness and true holiness, &c. of partaking the Divine nature. It matters not if this or that expression be understood by some, more principally in another sense, the thing itself, of which we speak, is as clearly expressed, and as urgently pressed, (as there was cause) as any other matter whatsoever throughout the whole book of God. But men are slower of belief, as to this great article of the Christian doctrine, than to most (I might say any) other. This truth more directly assaults the strong holds of the devil in the hearts of men, and is of more immediate tendency to subvert his kingdom; therefore they are most unwilling to have it true, and most hardly believe it. Here they are so madly bold, as to give the lie to all divine revelations; and though they are never so plainly told without holiness none shall see God, they will yet maintain the contrary belief and hope, till "Go, ye cursed," vindicate the truth of God, and the flame of hell be their eternal confutation. Lord! that so plain a thing will not enter into the hearts of men; that so urgent incul-

cations will not yet make them apprehend that their souls must be renewed or perish! that they will still go dreaming on with that mad conceit, that (whatever the word of God says to the contrary) they may yet with unsanctified hearts get to heaven! How deplorable is the case, when men have no other hope left them, but that the God of truth will prove false, and belie his word; yea, and overturn the nature of things to save them in their sins! Thou that livest under the gospel, hast thou any pretence for thy seeming ignorance in this matter? couldst thou ever look one quarter of an hour into the Bible, and not meet with some intimation of this truth? What was the ground of thy mistake? What hath beguiled thee into so mischievous a delusion? How could such an imagination have place in thy soul: that a child of wrath by nature could become a child of God without receiving a new nature; that so vast a change could be made in thy state, without any at all in the temper of thy spirit.

Secondly, Consider, that this change is in its own nature, and the design of God who works it, dispositive of the soul for blessedness.' Tis sufficiently evident from the consideration of the state itself of the unrenewed soul, that a change is necessary for this end; such a soul in which it is not wrought, when once its drowsy, stupifying slumber is shaken off, and its reflecting power awakened, must needs be a perpetual torment to itself. So far it is removed from blessedness, it is its own hell, and can fly from misery and death no faster than from itself. Blessedness composes the soul, reduces it to a consistency; it infers, or rather is, a self-satisfaction, a well-pleasedness and contentment with one's self, enriched and filled with the Divine fulness. Hence 'tis [q] at rest, not as being pent in, but contentedly dwelling with itself, and keeping within its own bounds of its own accord. The unrenewed soul can no more contain itself within its own terms or limits, is as little self-consistent, as a raging flame, or an impetuous tempest. Indeed its own lusts perpetually, as so many vultures, rend and tear it; and the more when they want external objects: then as hunger, their fury is all turned inward; and they prey upon intestines, upon their own subject; but unto endless torment, not satisfaction. In what posture is this soul for rest and blessedness? The nature of this change sufficiently speaks its own design. 'Tis an introduction of the *primordia*, the *very principles*, of blessedness. And Scripture as plainly

[q] αυταρκεια.

speaks the design of God:[r] He regenerates to the undefiled inheritance; makes meet for it; works, forms, or fashions the soul unto that self-same thing, *viz.* to desire and groan after that blessed state; and consequently to acquiesce and rest therein. Therefore, vain man, that dreamest of being happy without undergoing such a change; how art thou trying thy skill to abstract a thing from itself! for the pre-required righteousness whereunto thou must be changed, and this blessedness, are in kind and nature the same thing, as much as a child and a man. Thou pretendest thou wouldst have that perfected which thou canst not endure should ever be begun; thou settest thyself to prevent and suppress what, in its own nature, and by divine ordination, tends to the accomplishment of thy own pretended desires. Thou wouldst have the tree without ever admitting the seed or plant: thou wouldst have heat, and canst not endure the least warmth: so besotted a thing is a carnal heart!

Thirdly, That inasmuch as this blessedness consists in the satisfactory sight and participation of God's own likeness, unto whom the soul is habitually averse, this change must chiefly stand in its becoming holy or godly, or in the alteration of its dispositions and inclinations as to God. Otherwise the design and end of it is not attained. We are required to follow peace with all men, (but here the accent is put,) and *holiness*, without which no man shall see God, Heb. xii. 14. 'Tis therefore a vain thing, in reference to what we have now under consideration, *viz.* the possibility of attaining this blessedness, to speak of any other changes that fall short of, or are of another kind from, the right disposition of heart Godward. This change we are now considering, is no other than the proper adequate impress of the gospel discovery upon men's spirits, as we have largely shown the righteousness is, in which it terminates. The sum of that discovery is, that God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself,[s] the proper import of it, therefore, is the actual reconciliation of the soul to God through Christ; a friendly well-affected posture of spirit towards God, our last end and highest good; and towards Christ, our only way, since the apostacy, of attaining and enjoying it. To rest therefore in any other good dispositions or endowments of mind, is as much besides the business, as impertinent to the present purpose, as if one de-

[r] 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. 2 Cor. v. 5. Col. i. 12. [s] 2 Cor. v. 18, 19.

signed to the government of a city, should satisfy himself that he hath the skill to play well on a lute, or he that intends physic, that he is well seen in architecture. The general scope and tenour of the gospel tells thee, O man, plainly enough, what the business is thou must intend (if thou wilfully overlook it not) in order to thy blessedness. 'Tis written to draw thee into[t] fellowship with the Father and the Son, that thy joy may be full. It aims at the bringing of thee into a state of blessedness in God through Christ; and is therefore the instrument by which God would form thy heart thereto; the seal by which to make the first impression of his image upon thee, which will then as steadily incline and determine thy soul towards him, as the magnetic touch ascertains the posture of the needle. Wherefore doth he there discover his own heart, but to melt, and win, and transform thine? The word of grace is the seed of the new creature. Through the exceeding great and precious promises, he makes souls partake of the Divine nature. Grace is, firstly, revealed to teach the denial of ungodliness, &c. Turn thy thoughts hither then, and consider what is there done upon thy soul by the gospel to attemper and conform it to God? Wherein has thy heart answered this its visible design and intendment? Thou art but in a delirious dream till thou seriously bethinkest thyself of this. For otherwise how can the aversion of thy heart from him escape thy daily observation? Thou canst not be without evidences of it. What pleasure dost thou take in retiring thyself with God; what care to redeem time only for converse with him? hadst thou not rather be any where else? In a time of vacancy from business and company, when thou hast so great a variety of things before thee, among which to choose an object for thy thoughts, do they not naturally fall upon any thing rather than God? Nor do thou think to shift off this by assigning the mere natural cause; for if there were not somewhat more in the matter, why is it not so with all? He upon whom this change had passed could say,[u] My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches.[x] My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord.[y] How precious are

t 1 John i. 1—4. u Psal. lxiii. 5, 6. x Psal. civ. 34.
y Psal. cxxxix. 17, 18.

thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with thee.[z] Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O God, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early, &c. Therefore plain it is, there is a sinful distemper to be wrought out, an ungodly disposition of heart, which it concerns thee not to rest till thou see removed.

Fourthly, Consider, that to become godly, or this change of inclinations and dispositions towards God, is that which of all other the soul doth most strongly reluctate and strive against; and which therefore it undergoes with greatest difficulty and regret. 'Tis a horrid and amazing thing it should be so, but Scripture and experience leave it undoubted that so it is. What! that the highest excellency, the most perfect beauty, loveliness, and love itself, should so little attract a reasonable, spiritual being that issued thence? His own offspring so unkind! what more than monstrous unnaturalness is this, so to disaffect one's own original! 'Twere easy to accumulate and heap up considerations that would render this astonishingly strange. So things are reckoned upon several accounts, either as they are more rare and unfrequent, (which is the vulgar way of estimating wonders,) or as their causes are of more difficult investigation; or (if they are moral wonders) as they are more unreasonable or causeless. Upon this last account,[a] Christ marvelled at the Jews' unbelief; and so is this hatred justly marvellous; as being [b] altogether without a cause. But thence to infer there is no such thing, were to dispute against the sun. No truth hath more of light and evidence in it, though none more of terror and prodigy. To how many thousand objects is the mind of man indifferent; can turn itself to this or that; run with facility all points of the compass, among the whole universe of beings: but assay only to draw it to God, and it recoils; thoughts and affections revolt, and decline all converse with that blessed object! Towards other objects it freely opens and dilates itself, as under the benign beams of a warm sun: there are placid, complacential emotions; amicable, sprightly converses and embraces. Towards God only it is presently contracted and shut up; life retires,

z Isa. xxvi. 3. a Mark vi. 6. b John xv. 25.

and it becomes as a stone, cold, rigid, and impenetrable: the quite contrary to what is required, (which also those very precepts do vainly imply,) 'tis alive to sin,[c] to the world, to vanity; but crucified, mortified, dead to God and Jesus Christ.

The natures of many men that are harsh, fierce, and savage, admit of many cultivations and refinings; and by moral precept, the exercise and improvement of reason, with a severe animadversion and observance of themselves, they become mild, tractable, gentle, meek. The story of the physiognomist's guess at the temper of Socrates is known. But of all other, the disaffected soul is least inclinable ever to become good-natured towards God, wherein grace or holiness doth consist. Here 'tis most unpersuadable, never facile to this change. One would have thought no affection should have been so natural, so deeply inwrought into the spirit of man, as an affection towards the Father of spirits; but here he most of all discovers himself to be without natural affection: surely here is a sad proof, that such affection doth not ascend. The whole duty of man, as to the principle of it, resolves into love. That is the fulfilling of the law. As to its object; the two tables divide it between God and our neighbour; and accordingly divide that love. Upon those two branches whereof, love to God, and love to our neighbour, hang all the law and the prophets. The wickedness of the world hath killed this love at the very root, and indisposed the nature of man to all exercises of it, either way, whether towards God or his neighbour. It hath not only rendered man unmeet for holy communion with God, but in a great measure for civil society with one another. It hath destroyed good nature: made men false, envious, barbarous; turned the world, especially the dark places of the earth, where the light of the gospel shines not, into habitations of cruelty. But who sees not the enmity and disaffection of men's hearts towards God, is the more deeply rooted and less superable evil?

The beloved apostle gives us a plain and sad intimation how the case is, as to this, when he reasons thus; He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? He argues from the less to the greater; and this is the ground upon which his argument is built, that the loving of God is a matter of greater difficulty, and from which the spirit of man is more

[c] Rom. vi. 11.

remote, than loving of his neighbour. And he withal insinuates an account why it is so, God's remoteness from our sense, which is indeed a cause, but no excuse: it is a peccant, faulty cause. For is our so gross sensuality no sin? that nothing should affect our hearts, but what we can see with our eyes? as if our sense were the only measure or judge of excellencies. We are not all flesh; what have we done with our souls? If we cannot see God with our eyes, why do we not with our minds? at least so much of him we might, as to discern his exeellency above all things else. How come our souls to lose their dominion, and to be so slavishly subject to a ruling sense? But the reason less concerns our present purpose; that whereof it is. the reason, that implied assertion, that men are in a less disposition to the love of God than their neighbours, is the sad truth we are now considering. There are certain homiletical virtues that much adorn and polish the nature of man, urbanity, fidelity, justice, patience of injuries, compassion towards the miserable, &c. and indeed without these, the world would break up, and all civil societies disband; if at least they did not in some degree obtain. But in the mean time men are at the greatest distance imaginable from any disposition to society with God. They have some love for one another, but none for him. And yet it must be remembered, that love to our neighbour, and all the consequent exertions of it, becoming duty by the divine law, ought to be performed as acts of obedience to God, and therefore ought to grow from the stock and root of a divine love; I mean, love to God. They are otherwise but spurious virtues, bastard fruits, (men gather not grapes of thorns, &c.) they grow from a tree of another kind; and whatever semblance they may have of the true, they want their constituent form, their life and soul. Though [d] love to the brethren is made a character of the regenerate state, of having passed from death to life; 'tis yet but a more remote, and is itself brought to trial by this higher and more immediate one, and which is more intimately connatural to the new creature, even the love of God; [e] By this we know we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. A respect to God [f] specifies every virtue and duty. Whatever is loved and served, and not in him and for him, (*servato ordine finis*, as

[d] 1 John iii. 14. [e] Chap. v. 2.

[f] Proinde virtutes quas sibi videtur habere, nisi ad Deum retulerit, etiam ipsa vitia sunt potius quam virtutes. Aug. de Civit. Dei, l. 19. c. 25.

the school phrase is,) becomes an idol; and that love and service is idolatry. And what a discovery is here of disaffection to God; that in the exercise of such (the abovementioned) virtues, one single act shall be torn from itself, from its specifying moral form, only to leave out him. A promise shall be kept, but without any respect to God, for even the promises made to him are broken without any scruple. That which is another's shall be rendered to him; but God shall not be regarded in the business. An alms given, for the Lord's sake left out. That which concerns my neighbour often done, but what concerns God therein, as it were, studiously omitted. This is what he that runs may read, that though the hearts of men are not to one another as they should, they are much more averse towards God.

Men are easier of acquaintance towards one another, they slide insensibly into each other's bosoms; even the most churlish, morose natures, are wrought upon by assiduous repeated kindnesses, (*gutta cavat lapidem,*) &c. as often-falling drops at length wear and work into very stones; towards God their hearts are more impenetrable than rocks, harder than adamants. He is seeking with some an acquaintance all their days: they live their whole age under the gospel, and yet are never won. They hearken to one another, but are utterly unpersuadable towards God; as the deaf adder that hears not the voice of the charmer, though charming never so wisely. The clearest reason, the most powerful arguments, move them not; no nor the most insinuative allurements, the sweetest breathings of love: [g] "How often would I have gathered thee, as the hen her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." God draws with the cords of a man, with the bands of love; but they still perversely keep at an unkind distance. Men use to believe one another, (were there no credit given to each other's words, and some mutual confidence in one another, there could be no human converse, all must affect solitude, and dwell in dens and deserts as wild beasts,) but how incredulous are they of all divine revelations, though testified with never so convincing evidence! Who hath believed our report! The word of the eternal God is regarded (O amazing wickedness) as we would the word of a child or a fool; no sober, rational man, but his narrations, promises, or threatenings, are more reckoned of. Men are

[g] Matt. xxiii. 37. See Psal. lxxxi. 8—13. Prov. i. 20—24, &c. Hos. xi. 4.

more reconcilable to one another when enemies, more constant when friends. How often doth the power of a conquering enemy, and the distress of the conquered, work a submission on this part, and a remission on that. How often are haughty spirits stooped by a series of calamities, and made ductile; proud arrogants formed, by necessity and misery, into humble supplicants, so as to lie prostrate at the feet of a man that may help or hurt them; while still the same persons retain indomitable unyielding spirits towards God, under their most afflictive pressure. Though his gracious nature and infinite fulness promise the most certain and liberal relief, 'tis the remotest thing from their thoughts to make any address to him. [h]They cry because of the oppression of the mighty, but none says, Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night? rather perish under their burthens than look towards God, when his own visible hand is against them, or upon them, and their lives at his mercy; they stand it out to the last breath; and are more hardly humbled than consumed; sooner burn than weep; shrivelled up into ashes sooner than melted into tears; [i]scorched with great heat, yet repent not to give glory to God; gnaw their tongues for pain, and yet still more disposed to blaspheme than pray or sue for mercy. Dreadful thought! As to one another reconciliations among men are not impossible or unfrequent, even of mortal enemies; but they are utterly implacable towards God! Yet they often wrong one another: but they cannot pretend God ever did them the least wrong, yea, they have lived by his bounty all their days. They say to God, "Depart from us," yet he filleth their houses with good things. So true is the historian's[k] observation, "Hatred is sharpest where most unjust."

Yea, when there seems at least to have been a reconciliation wrought, are treacheries, covenant breakings, revolts, strangeness, so frequent among men towards one another, as from them towards God? How inconsistent with friendship is it, according to common estimate, to be always promising, never performing; upon any or no occasion to break off intercourses, by unkind alienations or mutual hostilities; to be morose, reserved each to other; to decline or disaffect each other's converse; to shut out one another from their hearts and thoughts. But how

h Job xxxv. i Rev. xvi.

k Tacitus speaking of the hatred of Tiberius and Augusta against Germanicus, the causers whereof, saith he, were acriores, quia iniquæ.

common and unregretted are these carriages towards the blessed God! It were easy to expatiate on this argument, and multiply instances of this greater disaffection. But in a word, what observing person may not see, what serious person would not grieve to see, the barbarous sooner putting on civility; the riotous, sobriety; the treacherous, fidelity; the morose, urbanity; the injurious, equity; the churlish and covetous, benignity and charity; than the ungodly man, piety and sincere devotedness unto God? Here is the principal wound and distemper sin hath infected the nature of man with: though he have suffered a universal impairment, he is chiefly prejudiced in regard of his habitude and tendency towards God, and what concerns the duties of the first table. Here the breach is greatest, and here is the greatest need of repair. True it is, an inoffensive, winning deportment towards men, is not without its excellency, and necessity too. And it doth indeed unsufferably reproach Christianity, and unbecome a disciple of Christ; yea, it discovers a man not to be led by his Spirit, and so to be none of his; to indulge himself in immoral deportments towards men; to be undutiful towards superiors; unconversable towards equals; oppressive towards inferiors; unjust towards any. Yet is a holy disposition of heart towards God most earnestly and in the first place to be endeavoured, (which will then draw on the rest,) as having in it highest equity and excellency, and being of the most immediate necessity to our blessedness.

Fifthly, Consider, that there may be some gradual tendencies, or fainter essays, towards godliness, that fall short of real godliness, or come not up to that thorough change and determination of heart Godward, that is necessary to blessedness. There may be a returning, but not to the Most High,[1] and wherein men may be (as the prophet immediately subjoins) like a deceitful bow, not fully bent, that will not reach the mark; they come not home to God. Many may be almost persuaded, and even within reach of heaven, not far from the kingdom of God; may seek to enter, and not be able; their hearts being somewhat inclinable, but more averse; for they can only be unable as they are unwilling. The soul is in no possibility of taking up a complacential rest in God, till it be brought to this, to move toward him spontaneously, and with, as it were, a

[1] Hos. vii. 16.

self-motion. And then is it self-moved towards God, when its preponderating bent is towards him. As a massy stone that one attempts to displace, if it be heaved at till it preponderate, it then moves out by its own weight; otherwise it reverts, and lies where and as it did before. So 'tis with many men's hearts, all our lifting at them is but the rolling of the returning stone; they are moved, but not removed: sometimes they are lifted at in the public ministry of the word; sometimes by a private, seasonable admonition; sometimes God makes an affliction his minister; a danger startles them; a sickness shakes them; and they think to change their course: but how soon do they change those thoughts, and are where they were! What enlightenings and convictions, what awakenings and terror, what remorses, what purposes, what tastes and relishes, do some find in their own hearts, that yet are blasted and come to nothing! How many miserable abortions after travailing pangs and throes, and fair hopes of a happy birth of the new creature! Often somewhat is produced that much resembles it, but is not it. No gracious principle but may have its counterfeit in an ungracious heart; whence they deceive not others only, but themselves, and think verily they are true converts while they are yet in their sins. How many wretched souls, that lie dubiously struggling a long time under the contrary alternate impressions of the gospel on the one hand, and the present evil world on the other; and give the day to their own sensual inclinations at last! In some degree,[m] escape the corruptions of the world, by the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but are again entangled and overcome, so as their latter end is worse than their beginning. Such a man is so far from being advantaged by his former faint inclinations towards God, that he would be found at last under this aggravated wickedness beyond all other men; that when others wandered from God through inadvertency and inconsideration, this man will be found to have been his enemy upon deliberation, and against the various strivings of his convinced heart to the contrary. This is more eminently victorious and reigning enmity; such a one takes great pains to perish. Alas 'tis not a slight touch, an overly superficial tincture, some evanid sentiments of piety, a few good thoughts or wishes, that bespeak a new man, a new creature. 'Tis a thorough pre-

[m] 2 Pet. ii.

vailing change, that quite alters the habitual posture of a man's soul, and determines it towards God, so as that the after-course of his life may be capable of that denomination, a living to God, a living after the spirit; that exalts the love of God into that supremacy in him, that it becomes the governing principle of his life, and the reason and measure of his actions; that as he loves him above all things else, better than his own life, so he can truly (though possibly sometimes with a doubtful, trembling heart) resolve the ordinary course of his daily walking and practice into that love, as the directive principle of it. I pray, I read, I hear, because I love God. I desire to be just, sober, charitable, meek, patient, because I love God. This is the perfection and end of the love of God, (therefore that must needs be the principle hereof,) obedience to his will.[n] Herein appears that power of godliness denied (God knows) by too many that have the form: the spirit of love, power, and of a sound mind. That only is a sound mind in which such love rules in such power. Is not love to God often pretended by such that, whenever it comes to an actual competition, discover they love their own flesh a great deal more? that seldom ever cross their own wills to do his, or hazard their own fleshly interest to promote his interest? We may justly say, (as the apostle, in a case fitly enough reducible hither,)[o] how dwells the love of God in that man? Notwithstanding such a subdued ineffectual love to God, such a one shall be denominated and dealt with as an enemy. 'Tis not likely any man on earth hates God so perfectly as those in hell. And is not every quality, not yet perfect in its kind, and that is yet growing more and more intense, in the meantime allayed by some degree of its contrary? Yet that over-mastered degree denominates not its subject, nor ought a man from such a supposed love to God to have the name of a lover of him. That principle is only capable of denominating the man, that is prevalent and practical, that hath a governing influence on his heart and life. He in whom the love of God hath not such power and rule, whatever his fainter inclinations may be, is an ungodly man.

And now methinks these several considerations compared and weighed together, should contribute something to the settling of right thoughts in the minds of secure sinners, touching the nature and necessity of this heart-

n John ii. 5. Τετελειωται. o 2 Tim. iii. 5. chap. i. 7.

change; and do surely leave no place for the forementioned vain pretences that occasioned them. For (to give you a summary view of what hath been propounded in those foregoing considerations) it now plainly appears,—That the holy Scripture requires in him that shall enjoy this blessedness, a mighty change of the very temper of his soul, as that which must dispose him thereto; and which must therefore chiefly consist, in the right framing of his heart towards God; towards whom it is most fixedly averse, and therefore not easily susceptible of such a change. And that any slighter or more feeble inclination toward God will not serve the turn; but such only whereby the soul is prevalently and habitually turned to him. And then what can be more absurd or unsavoury, what more contrary to Christian doctrine, or common reason, than instead of this necessary heart-change, to insist upon so poor a plea, as that mentioned above, as the only ground of so great a hope? How empty and frivolous will it appear in comparison of this great soul-transforming change, if we severally consider the particulars of it. As for orthodoxy in doctrinals, 'tis in itself a highly laudable thing; and in respect of the fundamentals (for therefore are they so called) indispensably necessary to blessedness. As that cannot be without holiness, so nor holiness without truth.[p] But, (besides that this is that which every one pretends to,) is every thing which is necessary sufficient? As to natural necessity, (which is that we now speak to,) reason and intellectual nature are also necessary; shall therefore all men, yea, and devils too, be saved? Besides, are you sure you believe the grand articles of the Christian religion? Consider a little,—the grounds and effects of that pretended faith.

First, Its grounds. Every assent is as the grounds of it are. Deal truly here with thy soul. Can you tell wherefore you are a Christian? What are thy inducements to be of this religion? are they not such as are common to thee with them that are of a false religion? (I am here happily prevented by a worthy author,[q] to which I recommend thee, but at the present a little bethink thyself,) Is it not possible thou mayest be a Christian for the same reasons for which one may be a Jew, or a Mahometan, or a mere pagan? as, *viz.* education, custom, law, example, outward advantage, &c. Now consider, if thou find this upon inquiry

p John xvii. 17. q Mr. Pink's Trial of sincere love to Christ.

to be thy case, the motives of thy being a Christian admit of being cast together into this form of reasoning. That religion which a man's forefathers were of, which is established by law, or generally obtains in the country where he lives, the profession whereof most conduces to, or best consists with, his credit, and other outward advantages, that religion he is to embrace as the true religion. But such I find the Christian religion to be to me; therefore, &c. The proposition here is manifestly false; for it contains grounds common to all religions, publicly owned, and professed throughout the world; and sure all cannot be true: and hence the conclusion (though materially considered it be true, yet) formally considered, as a conclusion issuing from such premises, must needs be false. And what then is become of the orthodoxy; when, as to the formal object of thy faith, thou believest but as Mahometans and pagans do? when thou art of this faith, by fate or chance only, not choice or rational inducement?

Next, as to the effects of thy faith: let them be inquired into also, and they will certainly bear proportion to the grounds of it. The[r] Gospel is the power of God to salvation to every one that believes; to them that believe it not, it signifies nothing. The word of God received with a divine faith, as the word of God, works effectually upon all that so receive it, *i. e.* all that believe. What such efficacious workings of it hast thou felt upon thy soul? Certainly, its most connatural effect is that very change of heart, and inclination Godward, of which we have been speaking. What is so suitable to the gospel-revelation, as a good temper of heart Godward? And how absurd is it to introduce the cause on purpose to exclude its genuine inseparable effect! But evident it is, (though true faith cannot,) that superficial, irrational assent, in which alone many glory, may too well consist with a disaffected heart towards God: and can it then signify any thing towards thy blessedness? Sure to be so a solifidian is to be a nullifidian. Faith not working by love is not faith; at least profits nothing. For thy outward conformity in the solemnities of worship, 'tis imputable to so corrupt motives and principles, that the thing itself, abstractively considered, can never be thought characteristical and distinguishing of the heirs of blessedness. The worst of men may perform the best of outward duties. Thy

r Rom. i. 16. 1 Thes. ii. 13.

most glorious boasted virtues, if they grow not from the proper root, love to God, they are but splendid sins, as above appears, and hath been truly said of old. Thy repentance is either true or false; if true, it is that very change of mind and heart I speak of, and is therefore eminently signalized by that note, 'tis repentance towards God; if false, God will not be mocked. For thy regeneration in baptism; [s] what can it avail thee, as to this blessedness, if the present temper of thy heart be unsuitable thereto? Didst thou ever know any that held, that all the baptized should be saved? Will thy infant sanctity excuse the enmity and disaffection to God of thy riper age?

In short, if we seclude this work of God upon the soul, how inconsiderable is the difference between the Christian and the heathen world! Wherein can it then be understood to lie, but in some ineffectual notions, and external observances? And can it be thought that the righteous, holy God, will make so vast a difference in the states of men hereafter, who differ so little here? or that it shall so highly recommend a man to God, that it was his lot to be born, and to have lived upon such a turf or soil, or in such a clime or part of the world? His gracious providence is thankfully to be acknowledged and adored, that hath assigned us our stations under the Gospel: but then it must be remembered, the Gospel hath the goodness, not of the end, but of the means; which, as by our improvement or non-improvement, it becomes effectual or ineffectual, doth acquit from, or aggravate, condemnation: and that it works not as a charm or spell, we know not how, or why, or when we think not of it; but by recommending itself, in the demonstration and power of the Holy Ghost, to our reason and consciences, to our wills and affections, [t] till we be delivered up into the mould or form of it. Surely were it so slight a matter, as too many fondly dream, that must distinguish between them that shall be saved and shall perish, there would need no striving to enter in at the strait gate; and the disciple's question would never have been, Who then shall be saved? but rather, Who shall not be saved? nor would it have been resolved by our Saviour into the immediate power of him alone, [u] to whom all things are possible, that any are saved at all; nor have been so earnestly asserted by him, that [x] none could come

s Heb. vi.
t Rom. vi. 17.
u Matt. xix.
x 1 John vi.

to him but whom his Father draws. The obvious import of which passages is such, that if careless sinners could once obtain of themselves seriously to consider them, methinks they would find little rest in their spirits, till they might discern a work wrought there, in some degree worthy of God; an impression some way proportionable to the power of an almighty arm, and that might speak God its author. For notwithstanding the soul's natural capacities before asserted and inferred, its [y] moral incapacity, I mean its wicked aversion from God, is such as none but God himself can overcome. Nor is that aversion the less culpable, for that it is so hardly overcome, but the more. 'Tis an aversion of will; and who sees not, that every man is more wicked, according as his will is more wickedly bent? Hence his impotency or inability to turn to God, is not such as that he cannot turn if he would? but it consists in this, that he is not willing. He affects a distance from God. Which shows therefore the necessity still of this change. For the possibility of it, and the encouragement (according to the methods wherein God is wont to dispense his grace) the sinner hath to hope and endeavour it, will more fitly fall into consideration elsewhere.

CHAPTER XIII.

Fourth Inference. That the soul in which such a change is wrought, restlessly pursues this blessedness till it be attained. Fifth Inference. That the knowing of God, and conformity to him, are satisfying things, and do now in a degree satisfy, according to the measure wherein they are attained. Sixth Inference. That the love of God towards his people is great, that hath designed for them so great, and even a satisfying good.

4. Infer. 'Tis further to be inferred, that a soul wherein such a change is wrought, pursues this blessedness with

y That moral incapacity is also in some sense truly natural, that is, in the same sense wherein we are said to be by nature the children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3. Therefore human nature must be considered as created by God, and as propagated by man. In the former sense, as God is the author of it, 'tis taken in this distinction, of moral and natural impotency, which needs not further explication; yet you may take this account of it from Dr. Twisse, Impotentia faciendi quod Deo gratum est et acceptum, non est impotentia naturæ, sed morum. Nulla etenim nobis deest facultas naturæ per peccatum originale, juxta illud Augustini: Nulli agnoscendæ veritatis abstulit facultatem. Adhuc remanet potentia, qua facere possumus quæcunque volumus. Vind. l. 3. errat. 9. sect. 6. Naturalem potentiam, quidlibet agendi pro arbitrio ipsorum, dicimus ad omnes transmitti, non autem potentiam moralem. Vindic. Criminat. 3. S. 1. digr. 2. chap. 8.

restless, supreme desire, till it attain to the fulness thereof. We have here a plainly implied description of the posture and tendency of such a soul (even of a sanctified holy soul, which had therefore undergone this blessed change) towards this state of blessedness. I shall (saith he) be satisfied with thy likeness, *q. d.* I cannot be satisfied otherwise. We have seen how great a change is necessary to dispose the soul to this blessedness, which being once wrought, nothing else can satisfy it. Such a thing is this blessedness; (I speak now of so much of it as is previous and conducing to satisfaction, or of blessedness materially considered, the Divine glory to be beheld and participated;) 'tis of that nature, it makes the soul restless, it lets it not be quiet, after it hath got some apprehension of it, till it attain the full enjoyment. The whole life of such a one, is a continual seeking God's face. So attractive is this glory of a subject rightly disposed to it: while others crave corn and wine, this is the sum of the holy soul's desires, [a] Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance, &c. The same thing is the object of its present desires that shall be of its eternal satisfaction and enjoyment. This is now its one thing, the request insisted on, [b] to behold the beauty of the Lord, &c. and while in any measure it doth so, yet 'tis still looking for his blessed hope, still hoping to be like him, see him as he is. The expectation of satisfaction in this state, implies the restless working of desire till then; for what is this satisfaction, but the fulfilling of our desires, the perfecting of the soul's motions in a complacential rest? Motion and rest do exactly correspond each to other. Nothing can naturally rest in any place, to which it was not before naturally inclined to move. And the rest is proportionably more composed and steady, according as the motion was stronger and more vigorous. By how much the heavier any body is, so much the stronger and less resistible is its motion downward: and then accordingly it is less moveable when it hath attained its resting place. 'Tis therefore a vanity and contradiction, to speak of the soul's being satisfied in that which it was not before desirous of.[c] And that state which it shall ultimately and eternally acquiesce in, (with a

a Psal. iv. b Psal. xxvii.

c Aptitudinally, I mean, and ex hypothesi, *i. e.* supposing the knowledge of the object: otherwise as to actual explicit desires, God doth give us beyond what we can ask or think. But 'tis impossible the soul should rest satisfied in that, which upon knowledge it is undesirous of, and doth or would reject.

rest that must therefore be understood to be most composed and sedate,) towards it must it needs move with the strongest and most unsatisfied desire, a desire that is supreme, prevalent, and triumphant over all other desires, and over all obstructions to itself; least capable of diversion, or of pitching upon any thing short of the term aimed at. Ask therefore the holy soul, What is thy supreme desire? and so far as it understands itself, it must answer, "To see and partake the Divine glory; to behold the blessed face of God, till his likeness be transfused through all my powers, and his entire image be perfectly formed in me: present to my view what else you will, I can be satisfied in nothing else but this." Therefore this leaves a black note upon those wretched souls that are wholly strangers to such desires; that would be better satisfied to dwell always in dust; that shun the blessed face of God as hell itself; and to whom the most despicable vanity is a more desirable sight than that of Divine glory. Miserable souls! Consider your state: can that be your blessedness which you desire not? or do you think God will receive any into his blessed presence, to whom it shall be a burden? Methinks, upon the reading of this you should presently doom yourselves, and see your sentence written in your breast. Compare your hearts with this holy man's; see if there be any thing like this in the temper of your spirits; and never think well of yourselves till you find it so.

5. Infer. The knowledge of God, and conformity to him, are in their own nature apt to satisfy the desires of the soul, and even now actually do so, in the measure wherein they are attained. Some things are not of a satisfying nature; there is nothing tending to satisfaction in them. And then the continual heaping together of such things, doth no more towards satisfaction, than the accumulating of mathematical points would towards the compacting of a solid body; or the multiplication of cyphers only, to the making of a sum. But what shall one day satisfy, hath in itself a power and aptitude thereto. The act, whenever it is, supposes the power. Therefore the hungry craving soul, that would fain be happy, but knows not how, needs not spend its days in making uncertain guesses, and fruitless attempts and trials: it may fix its hovering thoughts; and upon assurance here given, say, I have now found at last where satisfaction may be had; and have only this to do, to bend all my powers hither,

and intend this one thing, the possessing myself of this blessed rest; earnestly to endeavour, and patiently to wait for it. Happy discovery! welcome tidings! I now know which way to turn my eye, and direct my pursuit. I shall no longer spend myself in dubious, toilsome wanderings, in anxious, vain inquiry. I have found! I have found! blessedness is here. If I can but get a lively, efficacious sight of God, I have enough—Show me the Father, and it sufficeth. Let the weary, wandering soul bethink itself, and retire to God; he will not mock thee with shadows, as the world hath done. This is eternal life, to know him the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. Apart from Christ thou canst not know nor see him with fruit and comfort; but the gospel revelation (which is the revelation of God in Christ) gives thee a lovely prospect of him. His glory shines in the face of Jesus Christ; and when by beholding it thou art changed into the same likeness, and findest thyself gradually changing more and more from glory to glory, thou wilt find thyself accordingly in a gradual tendency towards satisfaction and blessedness: that is, do but seriously set thyself to study and contemplate the being and attributes of God; and then look upon him as through the Mediator, he is willing to be reconciled to thee, and become thy God; and so long let thine eye fix and dwell here, till it affect thy heart, and the proper impress of the gospel be by the Spirit of the Lord instamped upon it; till thou find thyself wrought to a compliance with his holy will, and his image formed in thee; and thou shalt soon experience thou art entering into his rest; and wilt relish a more satisfying pleasure in this blessed change, than all thy worldly, sensual enjoyments did ever afford thee before.

Surely, if the perfect vision and perception of his glorious likeness will yield a complete satisfaction at last, the initial and progressive tendencies towards the former will proportionably infer the latter. 'Tis obvious hence to collect, who are in this world (ordinarily and, *cæteris paribus*, where more unusual violent temptations hinder not) the most satisfied and contented persons; even those that have most of the clarifying sights of God, and thence partake most of his image (indeed Scripture only vouchsafes the name to such sights of God; [d] He that doth evil hath not seen God.) Such as have most of a godly frame wrought

d 1 John iii. 6. 3 John 11.

into their spirits, and that have hearts most attempered and conformed to God; these are the most contented persons in the world. Content is part of the gain that attends godliness; it concurring, renders the other a great gain; "godliness with contentment: the form of expression discovers how connatural contentment is to godliness; as if they were not to be mentioned apart. Godliness, as if he had said, is a very gainful thing, but if you would comprehend the gainfulness of it fully, do not abstract too curiously, take in with it that which is of so near an alliance, that you will hardly know how to consider them apart; let its inseparable adjunct, contentment, go along with it, and you will find it a gainful thing indeed. The true knowledge of God so directly tends to holiness, and that to contentation, that it may be too evidently concluded, that a discontented person hath little of the one or the other, not much knowledge, and less grace; he is so far from being like God, that in the apostle's language above we may say, he hath not seen him. Doth that person know God, or hath ever seen him, that falls not into the dust, admiring so glorious a Majesty? that subjects not himself to him, with loyal affections, accounting it his only grand concernment to please and serve him? But the discontented person takes upon him, as if he were God alone, and as if he expected every creature to do him homage, and thought the creation were made for the pleasure and service of none but him. Hath that person ever seen God, that acknowledges him not a sufficient portion, a full, all-comprehending good? Hath he seen him, that sees not reason to trust him, to commit all his concernments to him? Hath he seen him that loves him not, and delights not in his love? Hath he seen him that quits not all for him, and abandons not every private interest to espouse his? And how evidently do these things tend to quiet and compose the soul! Discontent proceeds from idolizing thoughts of ourselves: 'tis rooted in self-conceit, in self-dependence, self-love, self-seeking, all which despicable idols (or that one great idol, *self*, thus variously served and idolized) one sight of the Divine glory would confound and bring to nothing. The sights of God melt the heart, break it under a sense of sin, and hence compose it to a meek, peaceful humility; but the discontented spirit is an unbroken, proud, imperious spirit. The sights of God pu-

a 1 Tim. vi. 6.

rify the soul, refine it from the dross of this vile world, make it daily aspire to a conformity unto the pure and spiritual nature of God. But a discontented spirit is a sensual, terrene spirit? (for what but such objects are the usual matter of most men's discontents?) taking sensuality in its just latitude, 'tis a low dunghill spirit, fit for nothing but to rake and scrabble in the dirt.

I insist upon this, apprehending (what deserves more lamentations than it hath observation) that too many annex a profession of eminent godliness and spirituality to an indulged querulous, impatient temper of spirit; join a splendid appearance of piety, to an unreformed perverse frowardness; (which agree as well as a jewel of gold to a swine's snout;) nothing pleases them, their mercies are not worth the acknowledgment; their afflictions intolerable, not to be borne. They fall out and quarrel with all occurrences, actions, events; neither man nor God doth any thing good in their sight. The world is not well governed; nothing falls out well as to themselves. What can possibly be thought on more repugnant to the knowledge of God, the grand design of all religion, and the very spirit of the Gospel, than this temper? Which way do these tend and aim, but to lead souls to blessedness; to bring them into a peaceful, happy, satisfied state and frame? And must we, because that end cannot be attained here, therefore go the quite contrary way? or pretend we are going to heaven with our backs turned upon it? Sure the discoveries God now makes of himself to us, and by which he impresses his likeness upon his own: (though they ultimately design our satisfaction and blessedness in heaven, as intermediate thereunto;) they aim at the bringing us into a heaven upon earth; to form us unto a life agreeable, and that hath analogy with that of heaven; unto which nothing is more analogous in our present state, than that peace and serenity which result from Divine knowledge and holiness; nothing more inconsistent, than a peevish, fretful, turbulent spirit. The one is a participation of a bright and mild light from heaven; the other, of a dark and raging fire from hell. 'Tis only God's face, his glorious likeness reflected on our souls, that shall satisfy hereafter, and make heaven heaven. He doth not now wholly conceal himself from us, not altogether hide his face. The shining of the same face (in what degree he now vouchsafes it) will make this earth a heaven too. One glance towards him may transmit a lively pleasant

lustre upon our spirits,[f] they looked on him, and were lightened. And we live in the expectation of clearer and more impressive eternal visions. It will become us to express a present satisfiedness, proportionable to our present sights and expectations; and to endeavour daily to see more, and to be more like God; that we may be daily more and more satisfied; while we cannot yet attain, to be making gradual approaches towards that blessed state. By how much any have more of the vision and likeness of God in their present state, so much they approach nearer unto satisfaction.

6. Infer. We infer; The love of God to his people is great, which hath designed for them so great, and even a satisfying good. We cannot overlook the occasion this doctrine gives us, to consider and contemplate awhile the love of God. If this shall be the blessedness of his saints, 'tis a great love that shall be the spring and source of it. Two things here before our eyes discover the greatness of his love:—that it designs satisfaction to the persons meant; and—that they shall be satisfied with the Divine vision and likeness.

1. It designs their satisfaction. This is as far as love can go. 'Tis love to the uttermost: it doth not satisfy itself till it satisfies them. 'Tis love to spare an enemy, to relieve a stranger; but to satisfy for ever them that were both, this sure exceeds all the wonted measures of love. Much love is shown in the forgiveness of sin, in the supply of necessities; but herein (as the apostle speaks in another case) is the love of God perfected, as to its exercise: it hath now perfectly attained its end, when it hath not left so much as a craving desire, not a wish unsatisfied; the soul cannot say, "I wish it were better; O that I had but this one thing more to complete my happiness." It hath neither pretence nor inclination to think such a thought. Divine love is now at rest. It was travailling (big with gracious designs) before; it hath now delivered itself. It would rather create new heavens every moment, than not satisfy; but it hath now done it to the full; the utmost capacity of the soul is filled up; it can be no happier than it is. This is love's triumph over all the miseries, wants, and desires of a languishing soul: the appropriate peculiar glory of Divine love. If all the excellencies of the whole creation besides were contracted into one glorious creature, it would never be capable of this boast, I have satisfied

[f] Psal. xxxiv. 5.

one soul. The love of God leaves none unsatisfied, but the proud despisers of it. Now is the eternal sabbath of love. Now it enters into rest, having finished all its works; it views them over now with delight, for, lo! they are all good: its works of pardon, of justification, and adoption; its works of regeneration, of conversion, and sanctification; its establishing, quickening, comforting works; they are all good, good in themselves, and in this their end, the satisfaction and repose of blessed souls. Now Divine love puts on the crown, ascends the throne, and the many myriads of glorified spirits fall down about it and adore; all profess to owe to it the satisfying pleasures they all enjoy. Who can consider the unspeakable satisfaction of those blessed spirits, and not also reflect upon this exalted greatness of Divine love!

2. 'Tis again great love, if we consider wherewith they shall be satisfied. The sight and participation of the Divine glory, his face, his likeness, his represented and impressed glory. There may be great love that never undertakes nor studies to satisfy all the desires of the persons we cast our love upon, especially where nothing will satisfy but high and great matters. The love of God knows no difficulties; nor can be overset. The greater the performance or vouchsafement, the more suitable to Divine love. It hath resolved to give the soul a plenary satisfaction, perfectly to content all its desires; and since nothing else can do it, but an eternal beholding of the glorious face of the Divine Majesty, and a transformation into his own likeness, that shall not be withheld. Yea, it hath created refined, enlarged its capacity on purpose, that it might be satisfied with nothing less. Great love may sometimes be signified by a glance; the offered view of a willing face. Thus our Lord Jesus invites his church to discover her own love, and answer his, Let me see thy face, &c. Cant. ii. 14. Love is not more becomingly expressed or gratified, than by *mutual looks, ubi amor, ibi oculus.* How great is that love that purposely lays aside the vail, that never turns away its own, nor permits the aversion of the beholder's eye throughout eternity. Now we see in a glass; then face to face, as if never weary of beholding on either part; but on that part the condescension lies, is the transcendant admirable love. That a generous, beneficent, the other (till it be satisfied here) a craving, indigent love. And how inexpressible a condescension is this! Poor wretches!

many of whom, possibly, were once so low, that a strutting grandee would have thought himself affronted by their look, and have met with threatening rebukes their over-daring venturous eye; lo, now they are permitted (to stand before princes; that's a mean thing) to feed their eyes with Divine glory, to view the face of God. He sets them before his face for ever. And that eternal vision begets in them an eternal likeness; they behold and partake glory at once, that their joy may be full. They behold not a glorious God with deformed souls; that would render them a perpetual abomination and torment to themselves. Love cannot permit that heaven should be their affliction; that they should have cause to loath and be weary of themselves in that presence. It satisfies them, by clothing and filling them with glory; by making them partake of the Divine likeness, as well as behold it. 'Tis reckoned a great expression of a complying love, but to give a picture; when the parties loved only permit themselves to view in a mute representation a vicarious face. This is much more a vital image, (as before,) God's own livingness propagated in the soul; the inchoation of it is called the Divine love, the seed of God. What amazing love is this, of the great God to a worm! not to give over till he have assimilated it to his own glory; till it appear as a ray of light begotten of the Father of lights! [g] Every one, saith the apostle, that doth righteousness is born of him; and then it follows, [h] behold what manner of love—to be the sons of God; to be like him, to see him as he is, &c. How great a word is that (spoken in reference to our present state)—[i] to make us partakers of *his* holiness. And (as well it might) 'tis instanced as an effect and argument of love, (for sure chastening itself, abstracted from that end of it, doth not import love,) whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,—and then by and by, in the same series and line of discourse, is added, —to make us partakers of his holiness. Love always either supposes similitude, or intends it; and is sufficiently argued by it either way. And sure, the love of God cannot be more directly expressed, than in his first intending to make a poor soul like him, while he loves it with compassion; and then imprinting and perfecting that likeness, that he may love it with eternal delight. Love is here the first and the last, the beginning and end in all this business.

[g] 1 John ii. ult. [h] iii. 1. [i] Heb. xii.

CHAPTER XIV.

7. Inference. That since this blessedness is limited to a qualified subject, "I in righteousness," the unrighteous are necessarily left excluded. 8. Inference. That righteousness is no vain thing, inasmuch as it hath so happy an issue, and ends so well.

7. Infer. CONSIDERING this blessedness is not common, but limited to a qualified subject, "I in righteousness," a person clothed in righteousness; it evidently follows, the unrighteous are necessarily excluded and shut out, can have no part nor portion in this blessedness. The same thing that the apostle tells us, without an inference; [a]Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, &c. Intimating that to be a most confessed known thing: know ye not? is it possible ye can be ignorant of this? The natural necessity of what hath been here inferred, hath been argued already from the consideration of the nature of this blessedness. The legal necessity of it, arising from the Divine will and law, is that I mainly intend at present. By such a necessity also, they are excluded, who by God's rule (according to which the supreme judgment must be managed) shall be found unrighteous: those that come not up to the terms of the gospel-covenant; never accepted the offers, nor submitted to the commands of it; and that hence consequently are unrelated to Christ, and ununited to him; no way capable of advantage by his most perfect and all-sufficient righteousness, that alone fully answers all the exactions and demands of the covenant of works: and so, who are at last found unrighteous by the old law and the new, the law both of the Creator and Redeemer too. There is the same necessity these should be excluded, as that God should be just and true. The word is gone forth of his mouth in righteousness, and cannot return. He did not dally with sinners, when he settled those constitutions, whence this necessity results. He is not a man, that he should lie; nor the son of man, that he should repent. A heathen understood so much of the nature of God.

a 1 Cor. vi.

I have thought sometimes, with much wonder, of the stupid folly of unsanctified hearts; they are even confounded in their own wishes; and would have (in order to their security) they know not what. Were the question faithfully put to the very heart of such a one, What wouldst thou have done in order to thy eternal safety from Divine wrath and vengeance? would not the answer be, O that God would re-call those severe constitutions he hath made; and not insist so strictly on what he hath required in the gospel, in order to the salvation of sinners. But foolish wretch! dost thou know what thou sayest? wouldst thou have God repeal the Gospel, that thou mayst be the more secure? in what a case art thou then? Hast thou no hope if the gospel stand in force? what hope wilt thou have if it do not? Must the hopes of all the world be ruined to establish thine? and yet leave them involved in the common ruin too? What but the gospel gives the least hope to apostate sinners? There is now hope for thee in the gospel-promise, if thou return to God. [b]Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon. But take away the gospel, and where art thou? Were it possible for thee to repent, and become a new man; what settles the connexion between repentance and salvation, but the gospel-promise? Will the violated law of works accept thy repentance instead of obedience? Doth it not expressly preclude any such expectation? Doth it give any ground to look for any thing but death after sin? Thou must therefore fly to the Gospel, or yield thyself lost. And know, it contains none but faithful and true sayings, that have more stability in them than the foundations of heaven and earth: therefore expect nothing to be altered for thy sake. The gospel-constitution was settled long before thou wast born: thou comest too late with thy exceptions (if thou hadst any) against it. Remember therefore this is one of the unalterable determinations of this gospel, without holiness thou shalt never see God, or (which amounts to the same) thou canst not behold his face but in righteousness. There is no word in all the Bible of more certain truth than this. In this also how apt are sinners foolishly to entangle themselves! The Gospel is true, and to be believed till they meet with something that crosses

[b] Isa. lv.

them, and goes against the hair, and then they hope it is not so. But vain man! if once thou shake the truth of God, what wilt thou stay thyself upon? Is God true when he promises? and is he not as true when he threatens? If that be a true saying, "Say to the righteous, it shall be well with him,"—is not that as much to be regarded, "Wo to the wicked, it shall be ill with him? The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." Are not these of equal authority? If thou hadst any reason to hope thou mayst be happy though thou never be righteous; is there not as much reason to fear thou mightst be miserable though thou be; since the one is as much against the flat express word of God as the other? Let not thy love to sin betray thee out of all religion and thy wits together. Wherein wilt thou believe one upon the bare value of his word, that will lie to thee in any thing? Yea, and as it is the same authority that is affronted in every command, whence disobedience to one is a breach of all; so is the same veracity denied in every truth, and the disbelief of one belies all; and wilt thou believe him in any thing, thou hast proclaimed a liar in every thing? Therefore, so little hast thou gained by disbelieving the divine revelation in this thing, that thou hast brought thyself to this miserable dilemma; If the word of God be false, thou hast no foundation of any faith left thee; if it be true, it dooms thee to eternal banishment from his blessed face, while thou remainest in thy unrighteousness. It will not be thy advantage then to disbelieve this gospel-record, but to consider it, and take it to heart; 'twill prove never the less true at last, for that thou wilt not believe it; shall thy unbelief make the truth of God of none effect? And if thou wouldst but reasonably consider the case, methinks thou shouldst soon be convinced. Since thou acknowledgest (as I suppose thee to do) that there are two states of men in the other world, a state of blessedness, and a state of misery; and two sorts of men in this world, the righteous and the unrighteous; let thy reason and conscience now judge who shall be allotted to the one state, and who to the other. Sure, if thou acknowledge a righteous Judge of all to the world, thou canst not think he will turn men promiscuously into heaven or hell at random, without distinction; much less canst thou be so absurd and mad, as to think all the unrighteous shall be saved, and the righteous perish.

And then what is left thee to judge but that which I am now urging upon thee, that when the righteous shall be admitted to the vision of God's blessed face, the unrighteous shall be driven forth into outer darkness.

It may be some here will be ready to say, "But to what purpose is all this, they were of the same mind before, and cannot think that any one would ever say the contrary." Nor do I think so either; but 'tis one thing not to believe a conclusion to be true, and another to profess a contrary belief; and one thing to believe a conclusion, another to think we believe it. Men often know not their own minds. In practical matters, 'tis best known what a man's belief is by his practice: for when any profess to believe this or that practical truth, relating to their salvation, if they believe it not practically, *i. e.* with such a belief as will command their suitable practice, it matters not what belief they are of, or whether they were of that judgment or no: yea, it will prove in the issue better for them they had been of another, when their own professed belief shall be urged against them. But let us consider a little, how in practical matters of less concernment we would estimate a man's belief. You meet a traveller upon the way, who tells you, the bridge over such an unpassable river is broken down, and that if you venture you perish; if you believe him, you return; if you hold on, he reasonably concludes you believe him not; and will therefore be apt to say to you, if you will not believe me you may make trial. Your physician tells you a disease is growing upon you, that in a short time will prove incurable and mortal, but if you presently use the means he shall prescribe, 'tis capable of an easy remedy; how would you yourself have your belief of your physician judged of in this case? Would you expect to be believed, if you should say, you do not at all distrust your physician's integrity and judgment, but yet you resolve not to follow his directions; unless you would have us believe too, that you are weary of your life, and would fain be rid of it? There is no riddle or mystery in this. How ridiculous would men make themselves, if in matters of common concernment they should daily practise directly contrary to their professed belief? How few would believe them serious, or in their wits? But however, call this believing, or what you will, we contend not about the name; the belief of such a thing can no further do you good, you can be nothing the better for it, further than as

it engages you to take a course suitable and consequent to such a belief. To believe that there is a hell, and run into it; that unrighteousness persisted in will damn you, and yet will live in it. To what purpose is it, to make your boasts of this faith? But since you are willing to call this believing: all the foregoing reasoning is to engage you to consider what you believe. Do you believe that unrighteousness will be the death of your soul; will eternally separate you from God, and the presence of his glory? and when you have reasoned the matter with yourself, you find it to be certainly so: should not such a thing be more deeply pondered? The bare proposal of an evident truth commands present assent; but if I further bend my mind to reason out the same thing to myself, I am occasioned to take notice of the grounds, dependencies, the habitudes of it, what it rests upon, and whither it tends, and thence more discern its importance, and of what moment it is, than I should have done, if upon first view I had assented only, and dismissed it my thoughts. And yet is it possible, you should think this to be true, and not think it a most important truth? Is it a small matter in your account, whether you shall be blessed or miserable for ever? whether you be saved or perish eternally? Or is it considered by you, according as the weight of the matter requires, that as you are found righteous or unrighteous, so will it everlastingly fare with you?

You may possibly say, you already conclude yourself righteous, therefore no further employ your thoughts about it. But methinks, you should hardly be able however to put such a thing out of your thoughts; while as yet the final determination is not given in the case. If a man have a question yet depending, concerning his life or estate; though his business be never so clear, he will hardly forget it, the trial not being yet past. And though in this matter, you have no reason to suspect error or corruption in your Judge, (through which many honest causes may miscarry in a human judicature,) yet have you no reason to suspect yourself? If the Holy Spirit hath assured you, it hath not stupified you; but as you have then the less of fear, you have the more of love and joy. Therefore you will not thence mind such a concernment the less, but with the more delight; and therefore also, most probably, with the more frequency and intension. What a pleasure will it be to review evidences, and say, Lo! here are the medi-

ums by which I make out my title to the eternal inheritance. Such and such characters give me the confidence to number myself among God's righteous ones. And do you lead that heavenly raised life? do you live in those sweet and ravishing comforts of the Holy Ghost, that may bespeak you one whom he hath sealed up to the day of redemption? If you pretend not to any such certainty, but rely upon your own judgment of your case; are you sure you are neither mistaken in the notion of the righteousness required, nor in the application of it to your own soul? Possibly, you may think yourself, because in your ordinary dealing you wrong no man, (yourself being judge,) a very righteous person. But evident it is, when the Scripture uses this term as descriptive of God's own people, and to distinguish between them that shall be saved and perish, it takes it in that comprehensive sense before explained. And, however, it requires at least much more of thee, under other expressions, as thou canst hardly be so ignorant but to know. And do but use thy reason here a little, and demand of thyself: Is he to be accounted a righteous person, that thinks it fit to avoid wronging a man, but makes no conscience at all of wronging God? More particularly: Is it righteous, to live all thy days in a willing ignorance of the Author of thy being, never once to inquire,[c] Where is God my Maker? Is it righteous to forget him days without number, not to have him from day to day in all thy thoughts? Is it righteous to estrange thyself from him, and live as without him in the world, while thou livest, movest, and hast thy being in him? not to glorify him in whose hands thy breath is? to be a lover of pleasure more than God? a worshipper, in thy very soul, of the creature more than the Creator? Is it righteous to harden thy heart against his fear and love? to live under his power, and never reverence it? his goodness, and never acknowledge it? to affront his authority, to belie his truth, abuse his mercy, impose upon his patience, defy his justice; to exalt thy own interest against his; the trifling petite interest of a silly worm, against the great all-comprehending interest of the common Lord of all the world? to cross his will, to do thy own? to please thyself, to the displeasing of him? Whence hadst thou thy measures of justice, if this be just?

Again, is it righteous to deny the Lord that bought thee, to neglect that great salvation which he is the author of?

c Job xxxv.

And whereas he came to bless thee in turning thee from thine iniquities, wilfully to remain still in an accursed servitude to sin? when he was made manifest to destroy the works of the devil, still to yield thyself a captive at his will? Whereas he died that thou mightest not any longer live to thyself, but to him that died for thee, and rose again; and that he might redeem thee from thy vain conversation; and that thou art so expressly told, that such as still lead sensual lives, mind earthly things, have not their conversation in heaven, are enemies to the cross of Christ. Is it no unrighteousness, that in these respects thy whole life should be nothing else but a constant contradiction to the very design of his dying? a perpetual hostility, a very tilting at his cross? Is there no unrighteousness in thy obstinate infidelity, that wickedly denies belief to his glorious truths, acceptance of his gracious offers, subjection to his holy laws? No unrighteousness in thy obstinate, remorseless impenitency? thy heart that cannot repent? that melts not, while a crucified Jesus, amidst his agonies and dying pangs, cries to thee from the cross, O sinner, enough, thy hard heart breaks mine! yield at last, and turn to God. Is it righteous, to live as no way under law to Christ? to persist in actual rebellion against his just government, which he died, and revived, and rose again, to establish over the living and the dead? yea, and that while thou pretendest thyself a Christian? In a word: Is it righteous to tread under foot the Son of God, to vilify his blood, and despise his Spirit? Is this the righteousness that thou talkest of? Are these thy qualifications for the everlasting blessedness? If thou say, thou confessest thou art in thyself, in these several respects, altogether unrighteous, but thou hopest the righteousness of Christ will be sufficient to answer for all; no doubt Christ's righteousness is abundantly available to all the ends for which it was intended by the Father and him; but it shall never answer all the ends that a foolish, wicked heart will fondly imagine to itself.

In short, it serves to excuse thy non-performance of, and stands instead of thy perfect sinless obedience to, the law of works; but it serves not instead of thy performance of what is required of thee, as the condition of the gospel-covenant. That is, it shall never supply the room of faith, repentance, regeneration, holiness, the loving of Christ above all, and God in him; so as to render these unnecessary, or salvation possible without them. There is not

one *iota* or *tittle* in the Bible, that so much as intimates an unregenerate person, an unbeliever, an impenitent or unholy person, shall be saved by Christ's righteousness; but enough to the contrary, every one knows, that hath the least acquaintance with the Scriptures. Vain man! what, is Christ divided, and divided against himself; Christ without against Christ within? his sufferings on the cross and foregoing obedience, against his Spirit and government in the soul? Did Christ die to take away the necessity of our being Christians? And must his death serve not to destroy sin out of the world, but Christianity? Who hath taught thee so wickedly to misunderstand the design of Christ's dying? And when the Scripture so plainly tells thee, [d] that God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life; and [e] that he became the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him; yea, and that he will come in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know and obey him not; what should induce thee to think thou mayest be saved by him, whether thou believest and obeyest or not? No, if ever thou think to see God, and be happy in him, thou must have a righteousness in thee resembling his; the very product, the thing wrought in the work of regeneration. [f] If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him. Whereupon follows the description of the blessedness of such righteous ones, in the beginning of the next chapter,——They are sons——they shall be like, &c. So that in a word, without some sight of God here, there is no seeing him hereafter; without some likeness to him now, none hereafter. And such as are destitute of that heart-conformity to the gospel, wherein the evangelical righteousness stands, are so far from it, that we may say to them as our Saviour to the Jews,[g] Ye have neither heard his voice, nor seen his shape, *i. e.* you have never had right notion, or any the least true glimpse of him; your hearts are wholly destitute of all divine impressions whatsoever.

8. Infer. We may further infer, from this qualification of the subject of blessedness, that righteousness is no vain thing. That is not in vain, that ends so well, and hath so happy an issue at last. Scripture tells us,[h] that the labour

d John iii. 16. e Heb. v. 9. f 1 John ii. 29.
g John v. 37. h Prov. x. 16.

of the righteous tendeth to life: and that we may understand it of their labour as they are righteous, we are more plainly told, that [i] righteousness tendeth to life; [k] and that to them that sow righteousness shall be a sure reward. That the righteous shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The righteous into eternal life. [l] And we here see that righteousness ends in the blessed sight of God's glorious face, in being satisfied with the Divine likeness. Foolish sinners are justly upbraided that they spend their [m] labour for that which satisfies not; take much pains to no purpose. Such are all the works of sin, toilsome, fruitless: [n] What fruit had ye of those things (*viz.* which ye wrought when you were free from righteousness) whereof ye are now ashamed; for the end of those things is death. But (it follows) being now made free from sin, and become servants to God, (which is paraphrased above by servants to righteousness,) ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. The fruit is a continual increase of holiness, a growing more and more like God; till at last everlasting life, satisfaction with his likeness, do crown and consummate all.

You have now what to answer to the atheist's profane query, What profit is it to serve God? to what purpose to lead so strict and precise a life? You may now see to what purpose it is; and whereunto godliness (which righteousness here includes) is profitable, as having, besides what it entitles to here, the promise of that life which is to come. There needs no more to discover any thing not to be vain (inasmuch as nothing can be said to be so, but in reference to an end, as being good for nothing) than the eviction of these two things:—that it aims at a truly worthy and valuable end; and—that its tendency thereto is direct and certain. In the present case, both these are obvious enough at the first view. For as to the former of them: all the world will agree, without disputing the matter, that the last end of man (*i. e.* which he ultimately propounds to himself) is his best good: and that he can design no further good to himself than satisfaction; nothing after or beyond that: and what can afford it, if the vision and participation of the Divine glory do not? As to the latter: besides all that assurance given by Scripture-constitution to the righteous man, concerning his future reward, let the consciences be consulted of the most besotted

i Ch. xi. 14, 18. k Matt. xiii. 43. l Chap. xxv. 46.
m Isa. lv. 2. n Rom. vi. 20, 21.

sinners, in any lucid interval, and they will give their suffrage, (Balaam, that so earnestly followed the reward of unrighteousness, not excepted,) that the way of righteousness is that only likely way to happiness; and would therefore desire to die, at least, the righteous man's death, and that their latter end should be like his. So is wisdom (I might call it righteousness too; the wicked man is the Scripture fool, and the righteous the wise man) justified not by her children only, but by her enemies also. And sure, 'tis meet that she should be more openly justified by her children, and that they learn to silence and repress those misgiving thoughts;[o] Surely I have washed my hands in vain, &c.; and [p] be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as they know their labour is not in vain in the Lord.

CHAPTER XV.

Two other inferences, from the consideration of the season of this blessedness: The former, that inasmuch as this blessedness is not attained in this life, the present happiness of saints must in a great part consist in hope. The latter, that great is the wisdom and sagacity of the righteous man, which waives a present temporary happiness, and chooses that which is distant and future.

INASMUCH as the season of this blessedness is not on this side the grave, nor expected by saints till they awake; we may further infer,

9. Infer. Ninthly, That their happiness in the meantime doth very much consist in hope; or that hope must needs be of very great necessity and use to them in their present state for their comfort and support. It were not otherwise possible to subsist in the absence and want of their highest good, while nothing in this lower world is, as to kind and nature, suitable to their desires, or makes any colourable overture to them of satisfaction and happiness. Others (as the Psalmist observes) have their portion in this life; that good, which as to the species and kind of it, is most grateful to them, is present, under view, within sight; and (as the apostle[a]) Hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for it? But those whose more refined spirits, having received the first fruits of the

o Psal. lxxii. p 1 Cor. xv. 58. a Rom. viii. 24.

Holy Spirit of God, prompt them to groan after something beyond time, and above this sublunary sphere; of them the apostle there tells us, that they are saved by hope. They (as if he should say) subsist by it; they were never able to hold out, were it not for their hope; and that a hope too, beyond this life, as is the hope of a Christian; [b] if in this life only we had hope in Christ, &c. The hope of a Christian, as such, is suitable to its productive cause, the resurrection of Christ from the dead; begotten to [c] a lively hope by the resurrection, &c. Thence is it the hope of a renewed, never-dying life, the hope of a blessed immortality; whereof Christ's resurrection was a certain argument and pledge.

Indeed the new creature is, *ab origine*, and all along, a hoping creature, both in its *primum* and its *porro esse*: 'tis conceived, and formed, and nursed up in hope. In its production, and in its progress towards perfection, 'tis manifestly influenced thereby. In the first return of the soul to God, hope, being then planted as a part of the holy, gracious nature, now manifestly discovers itself; when the soul begins to act, (as turning after the reception of the Divine influence is its act,) hope insinuates itself into (or induces rather) that very act. Returning is not the act of a despairing, but hoping soul. 'Tis God apprehended as reconcilable, that attracts and wins it; while he is looked upon as an implacable enemy, the soul naturally shuns him, and comes not nigh, till drawn [d] with those cords of a man, the bands of love. While it says, There is no hope, it says withal, (desperately enough,) [e] I have loved strangers, and after them will I go. But if there be any hope in Israel, concerning this thing: if it can yet apprehend God willing to forgive, then [f] Let us make a covenant, &c. This presently draws the hovering soul into a closure and league with him. And thus is the union continued. [g] Unsteadfastness in the covenant of God, is resolved into this not setting or fixing of hope in him; or (which amounts to the same) setting of hope in God is directed as a means to [h] steadfastness of spirit with him, and a keeping of his covenant. Revolting souls are encouraged to turn to the Lord upon this consideration, that salvation is [i] hoped for in vain from any other; the case being indeed the same in all after-conversions as in the first. God as multiplying to pardon, and still retaining the same name, [k] The Lord, the

b 1 Cor. xv. 19. c 1 Pet. i. 3. d Hos. xi. e Jer. ii. f Ezra x. 2, 3.
g Psal. lxxviii. 7, 18. h Ver. 10. i Jer. iii. 22, 23. k Exod. xxxiv. 6.

Lord gracious and merciful, (which name in all the severals that compose and make it up, is in his Christ,) invites back to him the backsliding sinner, and renews his thoughts of returning. And so is he afterwards under the teachings of grace, led on by hope, through the whole course of religion towards the future glory. Grace appears, teaching sinners to deny ungodliness, &c. and in the [l] looking for the blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the great God, &c. So do they keep themselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Thus is the new creature formed in hope, and nourished in hope; and if its eye were upon pardon at first, 'tis more upon the promised glory afterwards. And yet that last end hath in a degree its attractive influence upon it, from the first formation of it; 'tis even then taught to design for glory. 'Tis begotten to the lively hope, (where though hope be taken objectively, as the apposition shows of the following words, to an inheritance, yet the act is evidently connoted; for the thing hoped for, is meant under that notion, as hoped for,) and its whole following course is an aiming at glory; a [m] seeking glory, honour, immortality, &c. Thus is the work of sanctification carried on; [n] He that hath this hope purifieth himself. Thus are losses sustained; [o] The spoiling of goods taken joyfully through the expectation of the better and enduring substance. The most hazardous services undertaken, even an apostleship to a despised Christ,—[p] In the hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promised. All difficulties encountered and overcome, while the [q] helmet is the hope of salvation. All worldly evils are willingly endured; and all *such* good things quitted and forsaken, for Christ's sake and his elect's. And if the question be asked, (as it was once of Alexander, when so frankly distributing his treasures among his followers,) What do you reserve for yourself? The resolved Christian makes (with him) that short and brave reply, HOPE. He lives upon things future and unseen. The objects any one converses with most, and in which his life is as it were bound up, are suitable to the ruling principles of life in him. [r] They that are after the flesh, do savour the things of the flesh; they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. The principle of the fleshly life is *sense*: the principle of the spiritual life is *faith*. Sense is a mean, low, narrow, incomprehensive principle, limited to

l Tit. ii. 11, 12, 13. m Rom. ii. 7. n 1 John iii. 3. o Heb. x. 34.
p Tit. i. 1, 2. q 1 Thess. v. 8. r Rom. viii. 5.

a point, this centre of earth, and τὸ νῦν, *this now* of time; it can reach no higher than terrene things, nor further than present things; so brutish is the life of him that is led by it; wholly confined to matter and time. But the righteous live by faith. Their faith governs and maintains their life. They steer not their course according to what they see, but according to what they believe: and their daily sustenance is by the same kind of things. Their faith influences not their actions only, but their comforts and enjoyments. They subsist by the things they believe, even invisible and eternal things; but it is by the intervening exercise of hope, whose object is the same. The apostle having told us from the prophet, that the [s] just shall live by faith, presently subjoins a description of that faith they live by, *viz.* that it is [t] the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen; it substantiates and realizes, evidences and demonstrates those glorious objects, so far above the reach and sphere of sense. It is constantly sent out to forage in the invisible regions for the maintenance of this life; and thence fetches in the provisions upon which hope feeds, to the strengthening of the heart, the renewing of life and spirits. Our inward man, (saith the apostle)[u] is renewed day by day; while we look, or take aim (which is next in the series of the discourse, for the intervening verse is manifestly parenthetical) not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal. And the word here rendered [x] *look* doth plainly signify the act of hope as well as that of faith; for it doth not import a mere intuition or beholding, a taking notice or assenting only that there are such things, but a designing or scoping at them (which is the very word) with an appropriative eye; as things that, notwithstanding their distance, or whatsoever imaginable difficulty, are hoped to be attained to and enjoyed. And here are evidently the distinct parts of faith and hope in this business; faith, upon the authority and credit of the Divine word and promise, persuades the heart that there is such a glorious state of things reserved for the saints in general, (faith can go no further, for the word of promise goes no further,) and so serves instead of eyes in the Divine light, to view those glories; or it presents them (as so many substantial realities,) demonstrates them, submits them to view, whence *hope* reaches forth to them;

s Hab. ii. 4. t Heb. xi. 1. u 2 Cor. iv. 16, 18. x σκοπουντων.

contends against and triumphs over all attending difficulties, and possesses them; gives the soul an early anticipated fruition of them, for its present support and relief. So that it [y] rejoices in the hope of the glory of God. It might well therefore be said, I had fainted, if I had not believed, or who can express how sad my case had been, if I had not believed? for there is an elegant aposiopesis in the Hebrew text, the words "I had fainted" being supplied in the translation. If I had not believed, what had become of me then? *q. d.* Inasmuch as faith feeds, as it were, those hopes which more immediately, the Lord makes use of, for the strengthening his people's hearts, as it was intimated in the following words, compared with Psal. xxxi. 24. In the present case, faith ascertains the heart of the truth of the promises, so that thus the soul states the case to itself. Though I have not walked to and fro in those upper regions, nor taken a view of the heavenly inheritance; though I have not been in the third heavens, and seen the ineffable glory; yet the gospel revelation, which hath brought life and immortality to light, the word of the eternal God, who hath told me this is the state of things in the other world, cannot but be true: my faith may therefore be to me instead of eyes: and the Divine testimony must supply the place of light: both together, give, methinks, a fair prospect of those far distant, glorious objects which I have now in view. Now this awakens hope, and makes it revive, and run to embrace what faith hath discovered in the promise: [z] In the hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promised. 'Tis [a] the word of God that causes the soul to hope, (*i. e.* believed, for disbelieved, it signifies nothing with it,) and that not only as it contains a narration, but a promise concerning a future state. I may without much emotion of heart, hear from a traveller the description of a pleasant country, where I have not been; but if the lord of that country give me, besides the account of it, an assurance of enjoying rich and ample possessions there, this presently begets a hope, the pleasure whereof would much relieve a present distressed estate; and which nothing but that of actual possession, can exceed. That 'tis not more so with us here, admits of no excuse. Is God less to be believed than a man? Will we deny him the privilege of being able to discover his mind, and the truth of things credible, which we ordinarily allow to any one that is not a convicted liar? Christ

y Rom. v. 2. xii. 12. Psal. xxvii. 13, 14. z Tit. i. 2. a Psal. xix. 19.

expects his disciples should very confidently assure themselves of the preparations made for them in another world, upon that very ground alone, that he had not told them the contrary: [b] Let not your hearts be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare, &c. intimating to them, they ought to have that opinion of his plainness and sincerity, as never to imagine he would have proselyted them to a religion that should undo them in this world, if there were not a sufficient recompense awaiting them in the other, but he would certainly have let them known the worst of their case: much more might he expect, they should be confident upon his so often and expressly telling them, that so it is. If his silence might be a ground of hope, much more his word. And surely so grounded a hope cannot but be consolatory and relieving in this sad interval, till the awaking hour.

10. Infer. Lastly, Since this blessedness of the righteous is, as to the season of it, future, not expected till they awake, we may infer, that 'tis great wisdom and sagacity that guides the righteous man's choice; while he waves a present and temporary, and chooses this future and expected, blessedness. 'Tis true, that philosophy hath been wont to teach us, that choice or election hath no place about the end, because that is but one, and choice always implies a competition. But that very reason evinces, that in our present state and case, choice must have place about the end. That philosophy might have suited better the state of innocent Adam; when there was nothing to blind and bribe a man's judgment, or occasion it to deliberate about the supreme end, (then it might be truly said, deliberation itself was a defection,) nor to pervert and misincline his will; and so its action, in proposing its end, would be simple intention, not choice. But so hath the apostacy and sin of man blinded and befooled him, that he is at a loss about nothing more than what is the chief good. And though St. Augustine [c] reduce Varro's two hundred and eighteen differing sects about it to twelve, that's enough to prove (but daily experience doth it more convincingly, and sadly) a real, though most unjust competition. Therefore a sinner can never be blessed without choosing his blessedness; and therein it highly concerns him to

b John xiv. 1, 2. c De Civit. Dei, lib. 19.

choose aright, and that a spirit of wisdom and counsel guide his choice. While man had not as yet fallen, to deliberate whether he should adhere to God or no, was a gradual declension, the very inchoation of his fall; but having fallen, necessity makes that a virtue which was a wickedness before. There is no returning to God without considering our ways. The so much altered state of the case, quite alters the nature of the things. It was a consulting to do evil before; now to do good. And hence also, [d] choosing the Lord to be our God, becomes a necessary duty. Which is to make choice of this very blessedness, that consists in the knowledge, likeness, and enjoyment of him. And now, inasmuch as this blessedness is not fully attained by the longing soul, till time expire and its eternity commence; here is a great discovery of that wisdom which guides this happy choice. This is great wisdom in prospection; in taking care of the future; and at how much the further distance one can provide, so much the greater reputation of wisdom is justly acquired to him; yea, we seem to place the sum of practical wisdom in this one thing, while we agree to call it providence, under the contracted name of prudence. The wise man makes it at least an evidence or part of wisdom, when he tells us [e] the prudent foreseeth, &c. The righteous man so far excels in this faculty, as that his eye looks through all the periods of time, and penetrates into eternity, recommends to the soul a blessedness of that same stamp and alloy, that will endure and last forever. It will not content him to be happy for an hour, or for any space that can have an end; after which it shall be possible to him to look back and recount with himself how happy he was once: nor is he so much solicitous what his present state be, if he can but find he is upon safe terms as to his future and eternal state. As for me, saith the Psalmist, (he herein sorts and severs himself from them whose portion was in this life,) [f] I *shall* behold—I *shall* be satisfied, when I awake; *he could not say it was well with him, but shall be, q. d.* Let the purblind, short-sighted sensualist embrace this present world, who can see no further: let me have my portion in the world to come; may my soul always lie open to the impression of the powers of the coming world; and in this, so use every thing as to be under the power of nothing. What

d Josh. xxiv. 15.
e Prov. xxii. 3.
f Est bene non potuit dicere dicit erit.

are the pleasures of sin, that are but for a season; or what the sufferings of this *now*, this moment of affliction, to the glory that shall be revealed, to the exceeding and eternal glory? He considers, patient afflicted godliness will triumph at last, when riotous raging wickedness shall lament for ever. He may for a time weep and mourn, while the world rejoices; he may be sorrowful, but his sorrow shall be turned into joy, and his joy none shall take from him. Surely [g] here is wisdom; this is the wisdom that is from above, and tends thither. This is to be wise unto salvation. The righteous man is a judicious man; he hath in a measure that judgment (wherein the apostle prays the Philippians might [h] abound) to approve things that are excellent, and accordingly to make his choice. This is a sense (little thought of by the author) wherein that sober speech of the voluptuous philosopher is most certainly true, [i] A man cannot live happily, without living wisely. No man shall ever enjoy the eternal pleasures hereafter, that in this acquits not himself wisely here, even in this choosing the better part, that shall never be taken from him. In this the plain righteous man outvies the greatest sophies, the scribe, the disputer, the politician, the prudent mammonist, the facete wit; who, in their several kinds, all think themselves highly to have merited to be accounted wise: and that this point of wisdom should escape their notice, and be the principal thing with him, can be resolved into nothing else but the Divine good pleasure! In this contemplation our Lord Jesus Christ is said to have rejoiced in spirit, (it even put his great comprehensive soul into an ecstacy,) [k] Father I thank thee, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to babes; even so Father, because it pleased thee! Here was a thing fit to be reflected on, as a piece of Divine royalty; a part worthy of the Lord of heaven and earth. And what serious spirit would it not amaze, to weigh and ponder this case awhile; to see men excelling in all other kinds of knowledge, so far excelled by those they most contemn, in the highest point of wisdom; such as know how to search into the most abstruse mysteries of nature; that can unravel, or see through the most perplexed intrigues of state; that know how to save their own stake, and secure their private interest in whatsoever times; yet so little seen, (often, for not many wise)

g John xvi. 20, 22. h Phil. i. 9, 10. i Epicurus. k Luke x. 21.

in the matters that concern an eternal felicity! It puts me in mind of what I find observed by some, the *particular madness*, (a *deméntia quo ad hoc*,) as 'tis called; when persons, in every thing else, capable of sober, rational discourse, when you bring them to some one thing, (that in reference to which they became distempered at first) they rave and are perfectly mad. How many that can manage a discourse with great reason and judgment about other matters, who, when you come to discourse with them about the affairs of practical godliness, and which most directly tend to that future state of blessedness, they are as at their wit's end, know not what to say; they savour not those things! These are things not understood, but by such to whom it is given; and surely that given wisdom is the most excellent wisdom. Sometimes God doth, as it were, so far gratify the world, as to speak their own language, and call them wise that affect to be called so, and that wisdom which they would fain have go under that name; Moses, it is said, was skilled in all the [l] wisdom of Egypt, &c. But at other times he expressly calls those wise men fools, and their wisdom, folly and madness; or annexes some disgraceful abject for distinction sake; or applies those appellatives ironically, and in manifest derision. No doubt, but any such person as was represented in the parable, would have thought himself to have done the part of a very wise man, in entertaining such deliberation and resolves, as we find he had there with himself. How strange was that to his ears, [m] Thou fool, this night shall they require thy soul, &c. Their wisdom is sometimes said to be foolish; or else called the wisdom of the flesh, or fleshly wisdom; said to be earthly, sensual, devilish; they are said to be wise to do evil; while to do good they have no understanding; they are brought sometimes as it were upon the stage with their wisdom, to be the matter of Divine triumph; where is the wise? and that which they account foolishness is made to confound their wisdom. And indeed do they deserve to be thought wise, that are so busily intent upon momentary trifles, and trifle with eternal concernments? that prefer vanishing shadows to the everlasting glory? that follow lying vanities, and forsake their own mercies? Yea, will they not cease to be wise in their own eyes also, when they see the issue, and reap the fruits of their foolish choice? when they find the

l Acts vii. 22. m Luke xii. 20.

happiness they preferred before this eternal one is quite over; and nothing remains to them of it, but an afflictive remembrance? that the torment they were told would follow, is but now beginning, and without end? when they hear from the mouth of their impartial Judge, Remember, you in your life-time had your good things, and my faithful servants their evil; now they must be comforted, and you tormented? when they are told, [n] you have received the consolation; you were full, ye did laugh, now you must pine, and mourn, and weep? Will they not then be as ready to befool themselves, and say as they, [o] See, those (righteous ones) are they whom we sometimes had in derision, and for a proverb of reproach: we fools counted their life madness, and that their end was without honour; but now, how are they numbered among the sons of God, and their lot is among the saints? They that were too wise before, to mind so mean a thing as religion ([p] the world through wisdom knew not God; strange wisdom!) that could so wisely baffle conscience, and put fallacies upon their own souls; that had so ingenious shifts to elude a conviction, and divert any serious thought from fastening upon their spirits; that were wont so slyly to jeer holiness, seemed as they meant to laugh religion out of countenance; [q] they will now know, that a circumspect walking, a faithful redeeming of time, and improving it in order to eternity, was to do, not as fools, but as wise; and begin to think of themselves, now at last, as all wise and sober men thought of them before.

CHAPTER XVI.

The second general head of the improvement or use of the doctrine propounded from the text, containing certain rules or prescriptions of duty connatural thereto. 1. That we settle in our minds the true notion of this blessedness. 2. That we compare the temper of our own spirits with it, and labour thence to discern whether we may lay claim to it or no.

THUS far we have the account of the truths to be considered and weighed that have dependence on the doctrine of the text.

n Luke xi. 24, 25. o Wisd. v. 3. &c. p 1 Cor. i. 21.
q Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom. Prov. xv.

Next follow the duties to be practised and done in reference thereto, which I shall lay down in the ensuing rules or prescriptions.

1. That we admit and settle the distinct notion of this blessedness in our own minds and judgments; that we fix in our own souls apprehensions agreeable to the account this scripture hath given us of it. This is a counsel leading and introductive to the rest; and which if it obtain with us, will have a general influence upon the whole course of that practice which the doctrine already opened calls for. As our apprehensions of this blessedness are more distinct and clear, it may be expected more powerfully to command our hearts and lives. Hence it is, in great part, the spirits and conversations of Christians have so little savour and appearance of heaven in them. We rest in some general and confused notion of it, in which there is little either of efficacy or pleasure; we descend not into a particular inquiry and consideration what it is. Our thoughts of it are gloomy and obscure; and hence it is our spirit is naturally listless and indifferent towards it, and rather contents itself to sit still in a region all lightsome round about, and among objects it hath some present acquaintance with, than venture itself forth as into a new world which it knows but little of. And hence our lives are low and carnal; they look not as though we were seeking the heavenly country; and indeed who can be in good earnest in seeking after an unknown state? This is owing to our negligence and infidelity. The blessed God hath not been shy and reserved; hath not hidden or concealed from us the glory of the other world; nor locked up heaven to us; nor left us to the uncertain guesses of our own imagination, the wild fictions of an unguided fancy; which would have created us a poetical heaven only, and have mocked us with false elysiums: but though much be yet within the vail, he hath been liberal in his discoveries to us. Life and immortality are brought to light in the gospel. The future blessedness (though some refined heathens have had near guesses at it) is certainly apprehensible by the measure only of God's revelation of it; for who can determine, with certainty, of the effects of Divine good pleasure ('tis your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom?) Who can tell beforehand what so free and boundless goodness will do, further than as he himself discovers it? The discovery is as free as the

donation. The things [a] that eye hath not seen, and ear not heard, and which have not entered into the heart of man, God hath revealed to us by his Spirit; and it follows, ver. 12. We have received the spirit of God, that we might know the things freely given us of God. The Spirit is both the principle of the external revelation, as having inspired the Scriptures which foreshow this glory, and of the internal revelation also, to enlighten blind minds that would otherwise (μυωπάζειν) never be able to discover things at so great a distance, see afar off; therefore called the spirit of wisdom and revelation, by which [b] the eyes of the understanding are enlightened to know the hope of that calling, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance *among* the saints, as the εν there is most fitly to be rendered.

But this internal discovery is made by the mediation and interveniency of the external; therefore having that before our eyes, we are to apply our minds to the study and consideration of it; and in that way to expect the free illumination of the Holy Spirit. In the meantime we must charge our ignorance, and the darkness of our cloudy thoughts, touching these things, upon our carelessness, that we do not attend; or our incredulity, that we will not believe what God hath revealed concerning them: 'tis therefore a dutiful attention, and reverential faith, that must settle and fix the notion of this blessedness. If we will not regard nor give credit to what God hath discovered concerning it, we may sit still in a torpid, disconsolate darkness, which we ourselves are the authors of, or (which is no less pernicious) compass ourselves with sparks beaten out of our own forge, walk in the light of our own fire, cheat our souls with the fond dream of an imagined heaven, no where to be found, till we at length lie down in sorrow. How perverse are the imaginations of men in this (as in reference to the way, so) in respect of the end also; for as they take upon them to fancy another way to happiness quite besides and against the plain word of God; so do they imagine to themselves another kind of happiness, such as shall gratify only their sensual desires; a Mahometan, indeed a fool's, paradise; or at best 'tis but a negative heaven; they many times entertain in their thoughts (of which their sense too is the only measure) a state wherein nothing shall offend or incommode the flesh, in which they shall nor hunger, not thirst, nor feel want:

a 1 Cor. ii. 9. b Eph. i. 17.

and when they have thus stated the matter in their own thoughts, we cannot beat them out of it, but that they desire to go to heaven; (*viz.* the heaven of their own making;) when, did they conceive it truly and fully, they would find their hearts to abhor from it, even as hell itself. Therefore here we should exercise an authority over ourselves, and awaken conscience to its proper work and business; and demand of it, Is it not reasonable these divine discoveries should take place with me? hath not God spoken plainly enough? why should my heart any longer hang in doubt with me, or look wishly towards future glory, as if it were an uncouth thing? or is it reasonable to confront my own imaginations to his discoveries? Charge conscience with the duty it owes to God in such a case; and let his revelations be received with the reverence and resignation which they challenge; and in them study and contemplate the blessedness of awakened souls; till you have agreed with yourself fully how to conceive it. Run over every part of it in your thoughts; view the several divine excellencies which you are hereafter to see and imitate; and think what every thing will contribute to the satisfaction and contentment of your spirits. This is a matter of unspeakable consequence. Therefore, to be as clear as is possible, you may digest what is recommended to you in these more particular directions.

1. Resolve with yourselves, to make the divine revelation of this blessedness the prime measure and reason of all your apprehensions concerning it. Fix that purpose in your own hearts, so to order all your conceptions about it, that when you demand of yourselves, what do I conceive of the future blessedness? and why do I conceive so? the divine revelation may answer both the questions. I apprehend what God hath revealed, and because he hath so revealed. The Lord of heaven sure best understands it, and can best help us to the understanding of it. If it be said of the [c]origin of this world, πίστει νοοῦμεν, it may much more be said of the state of the other, we understand it by faith: that must inform and perfect our intellectuals in this matter.

2. Therefore reject and sever from the notion of this blessedness, whatsoever is alien to the account Scripture gives us of it. Think not that sensual pleasure, that a liberty of sinning, that an exemption from the divine

c Heb. xi. 3.

dominion, distance and estrangedness from God (which by nature you wickedly affect) can have any ingrediency into, or consistency with, this state of blessedness.

3. Gather up into it whatsoever you can find by the Scripture-discovery to appertain or belong thereto. Let your notion of it be to your uttermost, not only true, but comprehensive and full, and as particular and positive, as God's revelation will warrant: especially remember 'tis a spiritual blessedness, that consists in the refining and perfecting of your spirits by the vision and likeness of the holy God, and the satisfying of them thereby for ever.

4. Get the notion of this blessedness deep imprinted in your minds; so as to abide with you, that you may not be always at a loss, and change your apprehensions every time you come to think of it. Let a once well-formed idea, a clear, full state of it be preserved entire, and be (as a lively image) always before your eyes, which you may readily view upon all occasions.

2. *Rule.* That having well fixed the notion of this blessedness in your minds, you seriously reflect upon yourself, and compare the temper of your spirit with it; that you may find out how it is affected thereto; and thence judge in what likelihood you are of enjoying it. The general aversion of men's spirits to this so necessary work of self-reflection, is one of the most deplorable symptoms of lapsed degenerated humanity. The wickedness that hath overspread the nature of man, and a secret consciousness and misgiving, hath made men afraid of themselves, and studiously to decline all acquaintance with their own souls; to shun themselves as ghosts and spectres; they cannot endure to appear to themselves. You can hardly impose a severer task upon a wicked man, than to go retire an hour or two, and commune with himself: he knows not how to face his own thoughts; his own soul is a devil to him, as indeed it will be in hell, the most frightful, tormenting devil. Yet, what power is there in man, more excellent, more appropriate to reasonable nature, than that of reflecting, of turning his thoughts upon himself? Sense must here confess itself outdone. The eye that sees other objects cannot see itself: but the mind, a rational sun, cannot only project its beams, but revert them; make its thoughts turn inward. It can see its own face, contemplate itself. And how useful an endowment is this to the nature of man! If he err, he might perpetuate his error, and wander infinitely, if he had not this self-reflecting power;

and if he do well, never know without it the comfort of a rational self-approbation: which comfort paganish morality hath valued so highly, as to account it did associate a man with the inhabitants of heaven, and make him lead his life as among the gods (as their pagan language is): though the name of the reflecting power, *conscience*, they were less acquainted with; the thing itself they reckoned as a kind of indwelling deity, as may be seen at large in those discourses of Maximus Tyrius, and Apuleius, both upon the same subject, concerning the god of Socrates. And another giving this precept, [d] Familiarize thyself with the gods, adds, *and this shalt thou do if thou bear thy mind becomingly towards them, being well pleased with the things they give, and doing the things that may please thy dæmon or genius, whom* (saith he) *the most high God* (which they mean by Jupiter) hath put into every *man as a derivation or extraction from himself* (ἀπόσπασμα) *to be his president and guide; viz. every one's own mind and reason.* And this mind or reason in that notion of it, as we approve ourselves to it, and study to please it, is the same thing we intend by the name of conscience. And how high account they had of this work of self-reflection, may appear in that they entitled the oracle to that document, *[e]know thyself*, esteeming it above human discovery, and that it could have no lower than a divine original; and therefore consecrating and writing it up in golden characters in their Delphic temple (as Pliny informs[f] us) for a heavenly inspired dictate.

Among Christians that enjoy the benefit of the gospel-revelation, in which men may behold themselves, as one may his natural face in a glass, how highly should this self-knowledge be prized, and how fully attained! The gospel discovers, at the same time, the ugly deformities of a man's soul, and the means of attaining a true spiritual comeliness; yea, it is itself the instrument of impressing the Divine image and glory upon men's spirits; which when it is in any measure done, they become most sociable and conversable with themselves, and when 'tis but in doing, it so convincingly, and with so piercing energy, lays open

d Συζην θεοις Συζη δε θεοις ο συνεχως δεικνυς εαυτοις την εαυτου ψυχην αρεσκομενην μεντε τοις απονεμομενοις; ποιουσαν δε οσα βουλεται ο δαιμων, ου εκας-ω προς-ατην, &c.—ουτος δε es-ιν εκας-ου νους και λογος. Marc. Ant. l. 5.

e E cœlo descendit, γνωσθε σεαυτον.

f Hist. Mundi. The wisdom and significancy of which dedication Plato also (in Alcibiad. 1.) takes notice of.

the very thoughts of men's hearts, so thoroughly rips up and dissects the soul, [g] so directly turns and strictly holds a man's eye intent upon himself; so powerfully urges and obliges the sinner to mind and study his own soul; that where it hath effected any thing, been any way operative upon men's spirits, they are certainly supposed to be in a good measure acquainted with themselves, whatever others are. Therefore the apostle bids the Corinthians, if they desire a proof of the power and truth of his ministry, to consult themselves: [h] Examine yourselves, and presently subjoins, know ye not your own selves? intimating, it was an insupposable thing they should be ignorant. What! Christians and not know yourselves? Can you have been under the gospel so long, and be strangers to yourselves? none can think it. Sure 'tis a most reproachful thing, a thing full of ignominy and scandal, that a man should name himself a Christian, and yet be under gross ignorance, touching the temper and bent of his soul. It signifies, that such a one understands little of the design and tendency of the very religion he pretends to be of, that he was a Christian by mere chance, that he took up and continues his profession in a dream. Christianity aims at nothing, it gets a man nothing, if it do not procure him a better spirit; 'tis an empty insignificant thing, it hath no design in it at all, if it do not design this. It pretends to nothing else. It doth not offer men secular advantages, emoluments, honours; it hath no such aim to make men in that sense rich, or great, or honourable, but to make them holy, and fit them for God. He therefore loses all his labour and reward, and shows himself a vain trifler in the matters of religion, that makes not this the scope and mark of his Christian profession and practice; and herein he can do nothing without a constant self-inspection. As it therefore highly concerns, it well becomes, a Christian under the gospel, to be in a continual observation and study of himself, that he may know to what purpose he is a Christian; and take notice, what (or whether any) good impressions be yet made upon his spirit; whether he can gain any thing by his religion. And if a man enter upon an inquiry into himself, what more important question can he put than this, In what posture am I as to my last and chief end? how is my spirit framed towards it? This is the intendment and business of the gospel, to fit souls for

[g] Heb. iv. 12. [h] 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

blessedness; and therefore, if I would inquire, What am I the better for the gospel? this is the sense and meaning of that very question, Is my soul wrought by it to any better disposition for blessedness? Upon which the resolution of this depends, Am I ever likely to enjoy it, yea or no? That which may make any heart not deplorably stupid, shake and tremble, that such a thing should be drawn into question; but the case with the most requires it, and it must be so. 'Tis that therefore I would fain here awaken souls to, and assist them in; that is, propound something, (in pursuance of the present direction,) which might both awaken them to move this great question, and help them in discussing it. Both which will be done in showing the importance of this latter ultimate question in itself, and then the subserviency of the former subordinate one, towards the deciding it. These two things therefore I shall a little stay upon:—1. To show and urge the requisiteness of debating with ourselves, the likelihood or hopefulness of our enjoying this blessedness. 2. To discover that the present habitude, or disposedness of our spirits to it, is a very proper apt medium, whereby to judge thereof.

First, As to the former of these. Methinks our business should do itself; and that the very mention of such a blessedness, should naturally prompt souls to bethink themselves, Doth it belong to me? have I any thing to do with it? Methinks every one that hears of it should be beforehand with me, and prevent me here. Where is that stupid soul that reckons it an indifferent thing to attain this blessed state, or fall short of it? When thou hearest this is the common expectation of saints, to behold the face of God, and be satisfied with his likeness, when they awake; canst thou forbear to say with thyself, And what shall become of me when I awake? what kind of awaking shall I have? shall I awake amidst the beams of glory, or flames of wrath? If thou canst be persuaded to think this no matter of indifferency, then stir up thy drowsy soul to a serious inquiry, how 'tis likely to fare with thee for ever; and to that purpose put thy conscience to it to give a free, sincere answer to these few queries.

1. Canst thou say thou art already certain of thy eternal blessedness? Art thou so sure, that thou needest not inquire? I know not who thou art that now readest these lines, and therefore cannot judge of thy confidence whether it be right or wrong; only that thou mayst not answer too

hastily, consider a little, that [i]certainty of salvation is no common thing; not among (I speak you see of subjective certainty) the heirs of salvation themselves. How many of God's holy ones, that cannot say they are certain; yea, how few that can say they are! That exhortation to a church of saints, Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, (they of whom he expresseth such confidence, chap. i. 6. over whom he so glories, chap. iv. 1.) implies this to be no common thing; so doth Christ's advice to his disciples, Strive to enter in at the strait gate; and St. Peter to the scattered Jews, (that he saith had obtained like precious faith, &c.) Give diligence to make your calling and election sure; with many more passages of like import. Yea, how full is the Scripture of the complaints of *such* crying out of broken bones, of festering wounds, of distraction by divine terrors. Now what shall we say in this case, when so eminent saints have left us records of the distresses and agonies of their spirits, under the apprehended displeasure of God? May it not occasion us to suspend awhile, and consider? have we much more reason to be confident than they? and do we know none that lead stricter and more holy lives than we, that are yet in the dark, and at a loss in judging their spiritual states? I will not say, that we must therefore think ourselves bound to doubt, because another possibly better than we doth so. Unknown accidents may much vary the cases. But who would not think, that reason and modesty had quite forsaken the world, to hear (where the odds is so vastly great) the vain boast of the loose generality, compared with the humble, solicitous doubts of many serious knowing Christians? to see such trembling about their soul-concernments, who have walked with God, and served him long in prayers and tears; when multitudes that have nothing whereon to bottom a confidence but pride and ignorance, shall pretend themselves certain! If drawing breath awhile, thou wilt suspect thou have reason not to be peremptory in thy confidence, thou wilt sure think thyself concerned to inquire further. Urge thy soul then with this question again and again, Art thou yet certain, yea, or no?

2. Is it a comfortable state to be uncertain, or to have before thee apparent grounds of a rational and just doubt? For causeless doubts may sooner vanish, when their cause-

[i] Phil. ii. 12.

lessness is once discovered; and so they are less likely to keep a person that is capable of understanding his own case, under a stated discomfort. But I suppose thee, in order to the answering the foregoing query, to have in some measure considered the case; and that with a preponderating apprehension of danger in it, thou returnest it uncertain. Uncertain, man! And what, wilt thou remain uncertain? wilt thou sit still so, till thou perish? shall thy life hang in doubt, and thy soul be in jeopardy every hour, till the everlasting flames resolve the doubt, and put the matter out of question with thee? What course canst thou apply thyself to, but to inquire and search further into thy own state, to avoid the torture of thy own fears, the pangs and dreadful expectation of a palpitating, misgiving heart? 'Tis true, that inquisitive diligent doubtfulness hath hope and comfort in it; but doubtfulness joined with a resolution of casting off all further care, is utterly desperate and disconsolate. What remains to thee in that case, but a fearful looking for of fiery indignation? How canst thou pass an hour in peace, while thou apprehendest it unlikely, thou shalt see the face, and be satisfied with the image of God? Do not thy own thoughts represent to thee the amazing sights, the horrid images which shall for ever entertain and possess thy soul? Art thou not daily haunted with divine horrors? When thou say'st at night, thy bed shall refresh thee, art thou not terrified with dreams and affrighted with visions? Dost thou not say in the morning, Would to God it were evening; and in the evening say, Would to God it were morning? and while thou knowest not what else to do, meditate only changes instead of remedies? Or if thou find no such trouble invading thy mind, let me further ask:

3. Is it reasonable to be secure in such a state of uncertainty? Debate this matter a little while with thyself. Is it thy reason, or thy sloth, that makes thee sit still and forbear to look into thy spiritual affairs? Is it any rational consideration, or not rather the mere indisposition of a soul, afraid to know its own state, that suspends thee from inquiring? What hast thou to say, that looks like a reason? Is it that it will disturb thy thoughts, interrupt thy pleasures, fill thee with anxious cares and fears, which thou art as loth to admit, as burning coals into thy bosom? Is it that thou canst not endure to look upon so dreadful an object, as the appearing danger, or possibility of thy being miserable to eternity? And art thou therefore resolved to

shut thine eyes, and cry peace, peace? This is to avoid a present inconvenience, by an eternal mischief, (a gross overstraining the paradox!) for avoiding the present fear of hell to run into it; as if because a man cannot bear the thoughts of dying, he should presently cut his own throat. Vain man! canst thou not bear the thoughts of eternal misery; how wilt thou bear the thing? And how long-lived dost thou think that peace shall be, that thou purchasest upon so dear and hard terms? canst thou promise thyself an hour? mayst thou not lose thy purchase and price together the next moment? canst thou defer thy misery by forgetting it; or will thy judgment linger, and thy damnation slumber, while thou securely lingerest and slumberest? canst thou wink hell into nothing; and put it out of being, by putting it out of thy thoughts? Alas, man! open thy eyes when thou wilt, thou shalt find thou hast not bettered thy case by having them fast closed. The bitterness of death is not yet past. The horrid image is still before thee. This is not a fancied evil, which a man may dream himself into, and *eâdem operâ, with as little difficulty*, dream himself out of it again. No, thy case is miserable and dangerous when thou composest thyself to sleep; if thou awakest thou wilt find it still the same; only thou did'st not apprehend it before, for then thou wouldst not have slept: as the drunkard that kills a man, and after falls asleep in his drunken fit, he awakes and understands his wretched state. Would his sleeping on, till the officer's arrest had awaked him, have mended the matter with him? But thou wilt possibly say, is it not better here to have a little quiet now, than to be miserable by sad thoughts here, and miserable by actual suffering hereafter too? Is not one death enough? Why should one kill himself so often over; and hasten misery, as if it came on too slowly? Better, man? A hard choice. Supposing thou art to be eternally miserable, (if thou understandest that word eternity,) the good or evil of this little inch of time, will signify so little with thee, as hardly to weigh any thing in the scale of a rational judgment. But what, art thou now dreaming while thou thus reasonest? Dost thou yet no better understand thy case? Art thou not under the Gospel? Is it not the day of thy hope, and of the Lord's grace and patience towards thee? It was said that sleeping would not better thy case; but it was not said that awaking would not; but all that is here said, is designed to the awakening of thee, that thou mayst know

thy case, and endeavour a redress. Dost thou think any man in his sober wits would take all this pains thus to reason with thee, if that were the acknowledged and agreed state of thy case, that it were already taken for granted thou must perish? We might as well go preach to devils, and carry down the Gospel into hell. But dost thou think the holy merciful God sent his Son and his ministers to mock men; and to treat with them about their eternal concernments, when there is no hope? Were that thy case, thou hadst as good a pretence as the devil had, to complain of being tormented before thy time. But if thou be not wilfully perverse, in mistaking the matter we are reasoning about, thou mayst understand, thy reason is here appealed to in this; whether having so fair hopes before thee, as the gospel gives, of this blessedness we are discoursing of, it be reasonable from the apprehension of a mere possibility of miscarrying, (which can only be through thy wilful security and neglect,) to give up thyself to a supine negligence, and indulge that security which is so sure to ruin thee, and exchange a possible hoped heaven for a certain hell; or whether rather it be not reasonable to stir up thy soul to consider in what posture thou art, towards the attainment of this blessedness, that thou may'st accordingly steer thy course in order to it? If an accusation or a disease do threaten thy life, or a suspected flaw thy title to thy estate, wouldst thou not think it reasonable to inquire into thy case? And is it not much more desirable, in a matter of this consequence, to be at some certainty? and prudent to endeavor it, if it may possibly be attained? Whence let me further ask:

4. Canst thou pretend it to be impossible? Hath God left thee under a necessitated ignorance in this matter? or denied thee sufficient means of knowing how 'tis with thee in respect of thy spiritual estate? Though he have not given thee a list, or told thee the number or names of his sanctified ones, yet hath he not sufficiently described the persons, and given the characters by which they may be known? And hath he not furnished thee with a self-reflecting power, by which thou art enabled to look into thyself, and discern whether thou be of them or no? Doth he not offer and afford to serious, diligent souls, the assisting light of his blessed Spirit to guide and succeed the inquiry? And if thou find it difficult to come to a speedy, clear issue, to make a present certain judgment of thy case; ought not that to engage thee to a patient continued diligence, rather

than in a rash despairing madness to desist and cast off all? inasmuch as the difficulty, though great, is not insuperable; and the necessity and advantage incomparably greater. And (though divers other things do confessedly fall in) the principal difficulty lies in thy aversation and unwillingness. Thou art not put to traverse the creation? to climb heaven, or dig through the earth; but thy work lies nigh thee, in thy own heart and spirit; and what is so nigh, or should be so familiar to thee, as thyself? 'Tis but casting thy eye upon thy own soul, to discern which way 'tis inclined and bent, thou art urged to. Which is that we propounded next to discover: *viz.*

Secondly, That we are to judge of the hopefulness of our enjoying this blessedness, by the present habitude or disposedness of our spirits thereto. For what is that righteousness which qualifies for it, but the impress of the Gospel upon the minds and hearts of men? The gospel-revelation is the only rule and measure of that righteousness: it must therefore consist in conformity thereto. And look to the frame and design of the gospel-revelation, and what doth so directly correspond to it, as that very habitude and disposedness of spirit for this blessedness whereof we speak? Nothing so answers the Gospel, as a propension of heart towards God gratified, in part now, and increasing till it find a full satisfaction: a desire of knowing him and of being like him. 'Tis the whole design of the Gospel, which reveals his glory in the face of Jesus Christ, to work and form the spirits of men to this. They therefore whose spirits are thus wrought and framed, are righteous by the gospel-measure, and by that righteousness are evidently entitled and fitted for this blessedness. Yea, that righteousness hath in it (or rather is) the elements, the first principles, the seed of this blessedness. There can therefore be no surer rule or mark whereby to judge our states, whether we have to do with this blessedness, may expect it yea or no, than this. How stand we affected towards it? in what disposition are our hearts thereto? Those fruits of righteousness, by which the soul is qualified to appear without offence in the day of Christ, the several graces of the sanctifying Spirit, are nothing else but so many holy principles, all disposing the soul towards this blessedness, and the way to it; mortification, self-denial, and godly sorrow, take it off from other objects, the world, self, and sin; repentance (that part of it which respects God) turns the course of its motion towards God the end; faith directs

it through Christ the way; love makes it move freely; desire, earnestly; joy, pleasantly; hope, confidently; humility, evenly; fear, circumspectly; patience, constantly and perseveringly. All conspire to give the soul a right disposition towards this blessedness. The result of them all is heavenliness, a heavenly temper of spirit. For they all, (one way or other,) as so many lines and rays, have respect to a blessedness in God (which is heaven) as the point at which they aim; and the *cuspis*, the *point* in which they meet, in order to the touching of that objective point, is heavenliness. This is the ultimate and immediate disposition of heart for this blessedness; the *result*, the *terminus productus*, of the whole work of righteousness in the soul; by which 'tis said to be, as it were, *nata ad gloriam, begotten to the eternal inheritance.* Concerning this therefore chiefly institute thy inquiry. Demand of thyself, Is my soul yet made heavenly, bent upon eternal blessedness, or no? And here thou mayst easily apprehend, of how great concernment it is, to have the right notion of heaven, or future blessedness, as was urged under the foregoing rule. For if thou take for it another thing, thou missest thy mark, and art quite beside thy business; but if thou retain a right and scriptural notion of it, the rule thou art to judge by is sure, They shall have heaven whose hearts are intent upon it, and framed to it. Scripture is every where pregnant and full of this.

The apostle plainly intimates, this will be the rule of God's final judgment. Certainly it cannot be unsafe for us to judge ourselves by the same rule. He tells us, when God shall judge every one according to his works, (the great business of the judgment day, eternal life shall be the portion of them, [k] who, by patient continuance in well-doing, sought glory, and honour, and immortality; which are but other expressions of the same thing. What can be more plain? They shall have eternal life and glory that seek it; whose hearts are towards it. Again, speaking of true Christians, διακριτικῶς, (*i. e.* in a way of contradistinction from Pseudo-Christians, such as he saith were enemies of the cross,) he gives us among other, this brand of these latter, that they did mind earthly things, and tells us, their end should be destruction; but gives us this opposite character of the other, [l] our conversation is in heaven; our trade and business, our daily negociations, as well as

[k] Rom. ii. 6, 7. [l] Phil. iii. 18, 19, 20.

the privileges of our citizenship, lie there, as his expression imports; and thence intimates the opposite end of such, whence we look for a Saviour; not destruction, but salvation. And in the same context of Scripture, where they that are risen with Christ, [m] and who shall appear with him in glory, are required to set their mind on things above, and not on things on the earth. That we may understand this, not to be their duty only, but their character, we are immediately told, they who follow not this counsel, and mortify not their earthly members, (those lusts that dispose men towards the earth, and to grovel in the dust, as the graces of the Spirit dispose them heavenward, and to converse with glory,) are the children of disobedience, upon whom the wrath of God cometh. The faith the just live by, [n] is the substance of things hoped for, &c. Such believers are confessed, avowed strangers on earth; and seakers of the better, the heavenly country, whence 'tis said God will not be ashamed to be called their God; plainly implying, that as for low, terrene spirits, that love to creep on the earth, and embrace dunghills, God will be ashamed of them; he will forever disdain a relation to them, *while* and *as* such. And if we will be determined by the express word of our great Redeemer, to whom we owe all the hopes of this blessedness; when he had been advising not to lay up treasure on earth, but in heaven, he presently adds, [o] where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also. If thy treasure, thy great interest, thy precious and most valuable good be above, that will attract thy heart, it will certainly be disposed thitherward.

Yet here it must carefully be considered, that inasmuch as this blessedness is thy end, *i. e.* thy supreme good, (as the notion of treasure also imports,) thy heart must be set upon it above any other enjoyment; else all is to no purpose. 'Tis not a faint, slight, over-mastered inclination that will serve the turn, but (as all the fore-mentioned Scriptures import) such as will bespeak it a man's business to seek heaven, his main work; and give ground to say of him, his heart is there. If two lovers solicit the same person, and speaking of them in comparisons she say, this hath my heart; is it tolerable to understand her, as meaning him she loves less? So absurd would it be to understand Scriptures, that speak of such an intention of heart heaven-ward, as if the faintest desire, or coldest wish, or

m Col. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4. n Heb. xi. 1, 13, 16. o Matt. vi. 19, 20, 21.

most lazy inconstant endeavour, were all they meant. No, 'tis a steady, prevalent, victorious direction of heart towards the future glory, in comparison whereof, thou despisest all things else, (all temporal terrene things, that must be the *evidential* ground of thy hope to enjoy it. And therefore in this, deal faithfully with thy own soul, and demand of it, Dost thou esteem this blessedness above all things else? Do the thoughts of it continually return upon thee, and thy mind and heart, as it were, naturally run out to it? Are thy chiefest solicitudes and cares taken about it, lest thou shouldst fall short and suffer a disappointment? Dost thou savour it with pleasure? hath it a sweet and grateful relish to thy soul? Dost thou bend all thy powers to pursue and press on towards it? Urge thyself to give answer truly to such inquiries; and to consider them seriously, that thou mayst do so. Such whose spirits are either most highly raised and lifted up to heaven, or most deeply depressed and sunk into the earth, may make the clearest judgment of themselves. With them that are of a middle temper, the trial will be more difficult, yet not fruitless, if it be managed with serious diligence, though no certain conclusion or judgment be made thereupon. For the true design and use of all such inquiries and reflections upon ourselves (which, let it be duly considered) is, not to bring us into a state of cessation from further endeavours; as if we had nothing more to do (suppose we judge the best of our state that can be thought) but to keep us in a wakeful temper of spirit; that we may not forget ourselves in the great business we have yet before us, but go on with renewed vigour through the whole course of renewed endeavours, wherein we are to be still conversant, till we have attained our utmost mark and end. Therefore is this present inquiry directed, as introductive to the further duty, that in the following rules is yet to be recommended.

CHAPTER XVII.

Rule 3. Directing such as upon inquiry find, or see cause to suspect, a total aversation in themselves to this blessedness, to be speedy and restless in their endeavours to have the temper of their spirits altered and made suitable to it. Doubts and objections concerning the use of such endeavours, in such a case, answered. Some considerations to enforce this direction propounded and pressed.

3. *Rule.* THAT if upon such reflection we find or suspect ourselves wholly disaffected and unsuitable to this blessedness, we apply ourselves to speedy, incessant endeavours to get the temper of our spirits changed and fitted thereto. The state of the case speaks itself, that there is no sitting still here. This is no condition, *soul*, to be rested in; unless thou art provided to encounter the terrors of eternal darkness, and endure the torture of everlasting burnings. Yet am I not unapprehensive how great a difficulty a carnal heart will make of it to bestir itself in order to any redress of so deplorable a case. And how real a difficulty it is, to say any thing that will be thought regardable to such a one. Our sad experience tells us, that our most efficacious words are commonly wont to be entertained as neglected puffs of wind; our most convictive reasonings and persuasive exhortations lost (yea, and though they are managed too in the name of the great God) as upon the deaf and dead: which is too often apt to tempt into that resolution, of "speaking no more in that name." And were it not that the dread of that great Majesty restrains us, how hard were it to forbear such expostulations; "Lord, why are we commonly sent upon so vain an errand? why are we required to speak to them that will not hear, and expose thy sacred truths and counsels to the contempt of sinful worms; to labour day by day in vain, and spend our strength for nought?"—Yea, we cannot forbear to complain, "None so labour in vain as we: of all men none so generally unprosperous and unsuccessful. Others are wont to see the fruit of their labours, in proportion to the expense of strength in them: but our strength is labour and sorrow (for the most part) without the return of a joyful fruit. The husbandman ploughs in hope, and sows in hope, and is commonly partaker of his hope: we are sent to plough

and sow among rocks and thorns, and in the high-way; how seldom fall we upon good ground! Where have we any increase? Yea, Lord, how often are men the harder for all our labours with them, the deader for all endeavours to quicken them? Our breath kills them whom thou sendest us to speak life to; and we often become to them a deadly savour. Sometime, when we think somewhat is done to purpose, our labour all returns, and we are to begin again; and when the duties we persuade to, come directly to cross men's interests and carnal inclinations, they revolt and start back, as if we were urging them upon flames, or the sword's point; and their own souls and the eternal glory are regarded as a thing of nought: then heaven and hell become with them fancies and dreams; and all that we have said to them false and fabulous. We are to the most as men that mock, in our most serious warnings and counsels; and the word of the Lord is a reproach. We sometimes fill our mouths with arguments, and our hearts with hope, and think, sure they will now yield; but they esteem our strongest reasonings (as Leviathan doth iron and brass) but as straw and rotten wood; and laugh at Divine threatenings as he doth at the shaking of the spear. Yea, and when we have convinced them, yet we have done nothing; though we have got their judgments and consciences on our side and their own, their lusts only reluctate and carry all. They will now have their way though they perish. We see them perishing under our very eye, and we cry to them (in thy name, O Lord) to return and live, but they regard us not. For these things, sometimes we weep in secret, and our eyes trickle down with tears; yea, we cry to thee, O Lord, and thou hearest us not; thy hand seems shortened, that it cannot save; it puts not on strength as in the days of old: it hath snatched souls by thousands, as firebrands out of the fire; but now thou hidest and drawest it back. Who hath believed our report? To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Meanwhile even the devil's instruments prosper more than we; and he that makes it his business to tempt and entice down souls to hell, succeeds more than we that would allure them to heaven."

But we must speak, whether men will hear or forbear; though it concerns us to do it with fear and trembling. Oh, how solemn a business is it to treat with souls! and how much to be dreaded, lest they miscarry through our imprudence or neglect! I write with solicitude what shall become of these lines; with what effect they will be read

(if they fall into such hands) by them whom they most concern: yea, and with some doubt, whether it were best to write on or forbear. Sometimes one would incline to think it a merciful omission, lest we add to the account and torment of many at last; but sense of duty towards all, and hope of doing good to some, must oversway. Considering therefore the state of such souls I am now dealing with, I apprehend there may be obstructions to the entertainment of the counsel here recommended, of two sorts; partly in their minds, partly in their hearts; something of appearing reason, but more of real perverse will. That which I shall do in pursuance of it, will fall under two answerable heads; 1. A reply to certain doubts and objections, wherein to meet with the former: and—2. The proposal of some considerations, wherein to contend against the latter.

As to the first: It appears, men are grown ingeniously wicked, and have learned how to dispute themselves into hell; and to neglect what concerns their eternal blessedness with some colour and pretence of reason. It will therefore be worth the while to discuss a little their more specious pretences, and consider their more obvious (supposable) scruples, which will be found to concern, either the possibility, lawfulness, advantage, or necessity of the endeavours we persuade to.

Doubt 1. Is it a possible undertaking you put us upon; or, is there any thing we can do in order to the change of our own hearts? We find ourselves altogether undesirous of those things wherein you state blessedness, and they are without savour to us. If therefore the notion you give us of blessedness be right, all the work necessary to qualify us for it is yet to be done; we yet remain wholly destitute of any principle of life, that may dispose us to such relishes and enjoyments. If the new creature (as you say) consist in a suitable temper of spirit unto such a state as this, 'tis as yet wholly unformed in us: and is there any thing to be done by a dead man in order to life? Can a child contribute any thing to its first formation? or a creature to its coming into being?

Reply. If you were serious in what you say, methinks you should have little mind to play the sophisters, and put fallacies upon yourselves, in a matter that concerns the life of your soul. And what else are you now doing? For sure, otherwise one would think it were no such difficulty to understand the difference between the *esse simpli-*

ester, the mere being of any thing, and *the esse tale*, its *being such or such*; by the addition of somewhat afterward to that being. Though nothing could contribute to its own being simply; yet sure when it is in being, it may contribute to the bettering or perfecting of itself, (even as the unreasonable creatures themselves do:) and if it be a creature naturally capable of acting with design, it may act designedly in order to its becoming so or so qualified, or the attaining of somewhat yet wanting to its perfection. You cannot be thought so ignorant, but that you know the new creature is only an additional to your former being; and though it be true, that it can do no more to its own production than the unconceived child, (as nothing can act before it is,) doth it therefore follow, that your reasonable soul, in which it is to be formed, cannot use God's prescribed means in order to that blessed change? You cannot act holily as a saint; but therefore can you not act rationally as a man? I appeal to your reason and conscience in some particulars. Is it impossible to you to attend upon the dispensation of that gospel, which is God's power unto salvation, the seal by which he impresses his image, the glass through which his glory shines to the changing souls into the same likeness? Are you not as able to go to church as the tavern; and to sit in the assembly of saints as of mockers? Is it impossible to you, to consult the written word of God, and thence learn what you must be, and do, in order to blessedness? Will not your eyes serve you to read the Bible as well as a gazette or play-book? Is it impossible to inquire of your minister, or an understanding Christian neighbour, concerning the way and terms of blessedness? Cannot your tongue pronounce these words, What shall I do to be saved, as well as those, Pray what do you think of the weather? or, What news is there going? Yet further: Is it impossible to apply your thoughts to what you meet with suitable to your case, in your attendance upon preaching, reading, or discourse? Have all such words a barbarous sound in your ear? Can you not consider what sense is carried under them; what they import and signify? Can you not bethink yourself, Do the doctrines of God and Christ and the life to come, signify something or nothing? or do they signify any thing worth the considering, or that 'tis fit for me to take notice of?

And yet to proceed a little further with you: I pray you once more demand of yourselves, and put your consciences

closely to it, whether, when they have told you (as no doubt they will) that such things deserve your consideration, it be impossible to you to use your considering power thus, and employ it even about these things? Do but make this easy trial, and then say, whether it be impossible. See if you cannot select one hour on purpose, wherein to sit down by yourselves alone, with this resolution; Well, I will now spend this hour in considering my eternal concernments. When you have obtained so much of yourself; set your thoughts on work, (you will find them voluble and unfixed, very apt to revolt and fly off from things you have no mind to, but) use your authority with yourself, tell your soul (or let it tell itself) these things concerning thy life. At least, taking this prepared matter along with thee, (that thou mayst not have this pretence, thou knowest not what to think of,) try if thou canst not think of these things, now actually suggested and offered to thy thoughts: as namely, Consider, that thou hast a reasonable, immortal soul, which as it is liable to eternal misery, so it is capable of eternal blessedness: that this blessedness thou dost understand to consist only in the vision of the blessed God, in being made like to him, and in the satisfaction that is thence to result and accrue to thee. Consider, (what thy very objection supposeth,) that thou findest the temper of thy spirit to be altogether indisposed and averse to such blessedness. Is it not so? is not this thy very case? feel now again thy heart; try, is it not at least coldly affected towards this blessed state?

Is it not then obvious to thee to consider, that the temper of thy Spirit must be changed, or thou art undone? that inasmuch as thy blessedness lies in God, this change must lie in the alteration of thy dispositions and the posture of thy spirit towards him? Further, Canst thou not consider the power and fixedness of thy aversation from God, and with how mighty a weight thy heart is carried and held down from him? Try, lift at thy heart, see if it will be raised God-ward and heaven-ward? Dost thou not find it is as if thou wert lifting at a mountain, that it lies as a dead weight and stirs not? Ponder thy case in this respect. And then, is it not to be considered, that thy time is passing away apace? that if thou let thyself alone, 'tis likely to be as bad with thee to-morrow as this day, and as bad next day as to-morrow? And if thy time expire and thou be snatched away in this state, what will become of thee? And dost thou not therefore see a necessity of con-

sidering whatever may be most moving and most likely to incline thy heart God-ward, of pleading it more loudly and importunately with thyself? And canst thou not consider and reason the matter thus? "O my soul, what is the reason that thou so drawest back and hangest off from thy God? that thou art so unwilling to be blessed in him? that thou shouldst venture to run thyself upon eternal perdition rather? What cause hath he ever given thee to disaffect him? What is the ground of thy so mighty prejudice? Hath he ever done thee hurt? Dost thou think he will not accept a returning soul? That is to give the lie to his Gospel! and it becomes not a perishing wretch so to provoke him in whom is all its hope. Is the eternal glory an undesirable thing? or the everlasting burnings tolerable? Canst thou find a way of being for ever blessed without God; or whether he will or no? or is there a sufficient pleasure in thy sinful distance from God, to outweigh heaven and hell? Darest thou venture upon a resolution of giving God and Christ their last refusal; or say, thou wilt never hearken to, or have to do with them more? or darest thou venture to do what thou darest not resolve; and act the wickedness thou canst not think of? scorn eternal majesty and love; spurn and trample a bleeding Saviour?" Commune thus awhile with thyself; but if yet thou find thy heart relent nothing, thou canst yet further consider, that it lies not in thy power to turn thy own heart, (or else how comest thou thus to object?) And hence, canst thou avoid considering this is a distressed case? that thou art in great straits; liable to perish, (yea, sure to do so if thou continue in that ill temper of spirit,) and wholly unable to help thyself? Surely thou canst not but see this to be a most distressed case.

I put it now to thy conscience, whether being thus led on, thou canst not go thus far? See whether upon trial thy conscience give thee leave to say, I am not able thus to do or think: and be not here so foolish, as to separate the first cause and the second, in judging thy ability. Thou mayst say, No, I cannot think a good thought without God: true, so I know thou canst not move thy finger without God; but my meaning in this appeal to thy conscience is, whether upon trial thou findest not an assistance sufficient to carry thee thus far? Possibly thou wilt say, Yea, but what am I the better? I am only brought to see myself in a distressed perishing condition, and can get no further. I answer, 'Tis well thou art got so far, if thou indeed see thyself perishing, and thy drowsy soul awake into any

sense of the sadness of thy case. But I intend not thus to leave thee here; therefore let me furthermore demand of thee, What course wouldst thou take in any other distress, wherein thou knowest not what to do to help thyself? would not such an exigency, when thou findest thyself pinched and urged on every side, and every way is shut up to thee, that thou art beset with calamities, and canst no way turn thyself to avoid them; would not such an exigency force thee down on thy knees, and set thee a-crying to the God of mercy for relief and help? Would not nature itself prompt to this? Is it not natural to lift up hands and eyes to heaven when we know not what to do? [a] Therefore having thus far reasoned with thee about thy considering power; let me demand of thee if thou canst yet go somewhat further than considering? that is, in short, Is it impossible to thee to obey this dictate of nature? I mean, represent the deplorable case of thy soul before him that made it: and crave his merciful relief. Do not dispute the matter; thou canst not but see this is a possible and a rational course as thy case is. Should not a people seek unto their God? Fall down therefore low before him; prostrate thyself at the footstool of his mercy seat. Tell him, thou understandest him to be the Father of spirits, and the Father of mercies; that thou hast heard of his great mercy and pity towards the spirits of men in their forlorn lapsed state: what a blessedness he hath designed for them; what means he hath designed to bring them to it. Tell him thou only needest a temper of spirit suitable to this blessedness he invites thee to? that thou canst not master and change thy sensual, earthly heart; thou knowest he easily can; thou art to implore his help, that his blessed and Holy Spirit may descend and breathe upon thy stupid, dead soul; and may sweetly incline and move it towards him; that it may eternally rest in him; and that thou may'st not perish, after so much done in order to thy blessedness, only for want of a heart to entertain it. Tell him, thou comest upon his gracious encouragement, having heard he is as ready to give his Spirit to them that ask him, as parents bread to their craving children rather than a stone: that 'tis for life thou beggest: that 'tis not so easy to thee, to think of perishing for ever; that thou canst not desist and give up all thy hopes; that thou shalt be in hell shortly if he hear and help thee not. Lastly, If thus thou obtain

[a] Audio vulgus cum ad cœlum manus tendunt nihil aliud quem Deum dicunt. vulgi iste naturalis est sermo. Min. Fel. Octav.

any communication of that holy, blessed Spirit, and thou find it gently moving thy dead heart, let me once more demand of thee: Is it impossible to forbear this or that external act of sin at this time, when thou art tempted to it? sure thou canst not say, 'tis impossible. What necessitates thee to it? And then certainly thou may'st as well ordinarily withhold thyself from running into such customary sensualities, as to tend to grieve the Spirit, debauch conscience, stupify thy soul, and hide God from thee. And if thou canst do all this, do not fool thy slothful soul with as idle a conceit, that thou hast nothing to do, but to sit still, expecting till thou drop into hell.

Doubt 2. But have I not reason to fear, I shall but add sin to sin in all this? and so increase the burden of guilt upon my soul; and by endeavouring to better my case, make it far worse. Two things I consider, that suggest to me this fear,—the manner and end of the duties you put me upon, as they will be done by me in the case wherein I apprehend myself yet to lie.—1. Manner. As to the positive action you advise to, I have heard, the best actions of an unregenerate person are sins, through the sinfulness of their manner of doing them; though as to the matter of the thing done, they be enjoined and good: and though it be true, that the regenerate cannot perform a sinless duty neither; yet their persons and works being covered over with the righteousness of Christ, are looked upon as having no sin in them, which I apprehend to be none of my case. —2. End. You put upon me these things in order to the attaining of blessedness; and to do such things with intuition to a reward, is to be (as may be doubted) unwarrantable, mercenary, and servile.

Reply. First, As to this former reason of your doubt, methinks the proposal of it answers it. Forasmuch as you acknowledge the matter of these actions to be good and duty, (and plain it is they are moral duties, of common perpetual concernment to all persons and times,) dare you decline or dispute against your duty? Sure if we compare the evil of what is so substantially in itself, and what is so circumstantially, only by the adherence of some undue *modus* or *manner:* it cannot be hard to determine which is the greater and more dreadful evil. As to the present case; shouldst thou when the great God sends abroad his proclamation of pardon and peace, refuse to attend it, to consider the contents of it, and thy own case in reference thereto, and thereupon to sue to him for the life of

thy own soul? Dost thou not plainly see thy refusal must needs be more provoking than thy defective performance? This, speaks disability, but that, rebellion and contempt.[b] Besides, dost thou not see, that thy objection lies as much against every other action of thy life? The wise man tells us,[c] the ploughing of the wicked is sin; (if that be literally to be understood;) and what, wouldst thou therefore sit still and do nothing? Then how soon would that idleness draw on gross wickedness! And would not that be a dreadful confutation of thyself, if thou who didst pretend a scruple, that thou mightest not pray, read, hear, meditate, shalt not scruple to play the glutton, the drunkard, the wanton, and indulge thyself in all riot and excess? Yea, if thou do not break out into such exorbitancies, would any one think him serious that should say, it were against his conscience to be working out his salvation, and striving to enter in at the strait gate; seeking first the kingdom of God, &c. Would not this sound strangely? And especially, that in the meantime it should never be against his conscience, to trifle away his time, and live in perpetual neglects of God, in persevering atheism, infidelity, hardness of heart, never regretted or striven against; as if these were more innocent? And what thou sayst of the different case of the regenerate, is impertinent; for as to this matter the case is not different, they that take themselves to be such, must not think that by their supposed interest in the righteousness of Christ, their real sins cease to be such, they only become pardoned sins; and shall they therefore sin more boldly than other men, because they are surer of pardon?

Secondly, As to the other ground of this doubt, there can only be a fear of sinning, upon this account, to them that make more sins and duties than God hath made. The doubt supposes religion inconsistent with humanity: and that God were about to rase out of the nature of man, one of the most radical and fundamental laws written there,—a desire of blessedness;—and supposes it against the express scope and tenor of his whole gospel revelation. For what doth that design, but to bring men to blessedness? And how is it a means to compass that design, but as it

b Therefore as to that form of expression—that such acts of unregenerate men are sins,—that is a catachrestical piece of rhetoric, which being so understood, is harmless; but to use it in propriety of speech, and thence to go about to make men believe, that 'tis a sin to do their duty, is void both of truth and sense, and full of danger unto the souls of men.

c Prov. xxi. 4.

tends to engage man's spirits to design it too? unless we would imagine they should go to heaven blindfold, or be rolled thither as stones that know not whither they are moved; in which case the gospel, that reveals the eternal glory, and the way to it, were a useless thing. If so express words had not been in the Bible, as that Moses had respect to the recompense of reward; yea, that our Lord Jesus himself, for the joy set before him endured the cross, &c., this had been a little more colourable, or more modest. And what; do not all men, in all the ordinary actions of their lives, act allowably enough, with intuition to much lower ends? even those particular ends which the works of their several callings tend to, else they should act as brutes in every thing they do. And would such a one scruple, if he were pining for want of bread, to beg or labour for it for this end, to be relieved? 'Tis the mistaking of the notion of heaven that hath also an ingrediency into this doubt, if it be really a doubt. What? is it a low thing to be filled with the Divine fulness? to have his glory replenishing our souls? to be perfectly freed from sin? in every thing conformed unto this holy nature and will? That our minding our interest in this, or any affairs, should be the principal thing with us, is not to be thought; our supreme end must be the same with his, who made all things for himself, of whom, through whom, and to whom all things are, that he alone might have the glory. But subordinates need not quarrel. A lower end doth not exclude the higher, but serves it: and is, as to it, a means. God is our end as he is to be glorified and enjoyed by us: our glorifying him is but the agnition of his glory; which we do most in beholding and partaking it; which is therefore in direct subordination thereto.

Doubt 3. But it may further be doubted, What if it be acknowledged, that these are both things possible and lawful; yet to what purpose will it be to attempt any thing in this kind? O what assurance have I of success? Is there any word of promise for the encouragement of one in my case? Or is God under any obligation to reward the endeavours of nature with special grace? Wherefore, when I have done all I can, he may withhold his influence, and then I am but where I was, and may perish notwithstanding. And suppose thou perish notwithstanding? Do but yet consult a little with thy own thoughts: which is more tolerable and easy to thee; to perish, as not attaining what thy fainter strugglings could not reach; or for the most

direct, wilful rebellion, doing wickedly as thou couldst? Or who shall have, thinkest thou, the more fearful condemnation? He that shall truly say when his Master comes to judgment, "I never had indeed, Lord, a heart so fully changed and turned to thee, as should denote me to be the subject of thy saving, pardoning mercy; but thou knowest (who knowest all things) I longed (and with some earnestness) did endeavour it. Thou hast been privy to my secret desires and moans, to the weak strivings of a listless distempered spirit, not pleased with itself, aiming at a better temper towards thee. I neglected not thy prescribed means; only that grace which I could not challenge, thou wast pleased not to give: thou didst require what I must confess myself to have owed thee; thou didst withhold only what thou owedst me not; therefore must I yield myself a convicted, guilty wretch, and have nothing to say why thy sentence should not pass." Or he that shall as truly hear from the mouth of his Judge, "Sinner, thou wast often fore-warned of this approaching day, and called upon to provide for it; thou hadst precept upon precept, and line upon line. The counsels of life and peace were with frequent importunity pressed upon thee, but thou rejectedst all with proud contempt, didst despise with the same profane scorn the offers, commands, and threats, of him that made thee; hardenedst thy heart to the most obstinate rebellion against his known laws; didst all the wickedness to which thy heart prompted thee, without restraint; declinedst every thing of duty which his authority, and the exigency of thy own case, did oblige thee to; didst avoid as much as thou couldst to hear or know any thing of my will; couldst not find one serious, considering hour in a whole life-time, to bethink thyself, what was likely to become of thee when thy place on earth should know thee no more. Thou mightst know, thou wast at my mercy, thy breath in my hand, and that I could easily have cut thee off any moment of that large space of time my patience allowed thee in the world; yet thou never thoughtest it worth the while to sue to me for thy life. Destruction from the Lord was never a terror to thee. Thou wouldst never be brought upon thy knees; I had none of thy addresses; never didst thou sigh out a serious request for mercy; thy soul was not worth so much in thy account. Thy blood, wretch, be upon thy guilty head: Depart, accursed, into everlasting flames," &c.

Come now, use thy reason awhile, employ a few sober

thoughts about this matter; remember, thou wilt have a long eternity wherein to recognise the passages of thy life, and the state of thy case in the last judgment. Were it supposable, that one who had done as the former, should be left finally destitute of Divine grace and perish; yet in which of these cases wouldst thou choose to be found at last? But why yet shouldst thou imagine so bad an issue, as that after thine utmost endeavours, grace should be withheld, and leave thee to perish; because God hath not bound himself by promise to thee? What promise have the ravens to be heard when they cry? But thou art a sinner: true, otherwise thou wert not without promise; the promises of the first covenant would at least belong to thee. Yet experience tells the world, his unpromised mercies freely flow everywhere: The whole earth is full of his goodness; yea, but his special grace is conveyed by promise only, and that only through Christ; and how can it be communicated *through* him to any but those that are *in* him? What then, is the first in-being in Christ no special grace? or is there any being in him before the first, that should be the ground of that gracious communication? Things are plain enough, if we make them not intricate, or entangle ourselves by foolish subtleties. God promises sinners indefinitely, pardon and eternal life, for the sake of Christ, on condition that they believe on him. He gives of his good pleasure that grace whereby he draws any to Christ, without promise directly made to them, whether absolute or conditional; though he give it for the sake of Christ also. His discovery of his purpose to give such grace to some, indefinitely, amounts not to a promise claimable by any: for if it be said to be an absolute promise to particular persons, who are they? whose duty is it to believe it made to him? If conditional, what are the conditions upon which the first grace is certainly promised? who can be able to assign them? But, poor soul! thou needest not stay to puzzle thyself about this matter. God binds himself to do what he promises; but hath he any where bound himself to do no more? Did he promise thee thy being; or that thou shouldst live to this day? did he promise thee the bread that sustains thee, the daily comforts of thy life? Yea, (what is nearer the present purpose,) did he promise thee a station under the gospel? or that thou shouldst ever hear the name of Christ? If ever his Spirit have in any degree moved upon thy heart, inclined thee at all seriously to consider thy eternal con-

cernments, did he before-hand make thee any promise of that? A promise would give thee a full certainty of the issue, if it were absolute, out of hand; if conditional, as soon as thou findest the condition performed. But what! canst thou act upon no lower rate than a foregoing certainty, a pre-assurance of the event? My friend, consider a little, (what thou canst not but know already,) that 'tis hope (built with those that are rational, upon rational probabilities, with many, oftentimes upon none at all) is the great engine that moves the world, that keeps all sorts of men in action. Doth the husbandman foreknow when he plows and sows, that the crop will answer his cost and pains? Doth the merchant foreknow, when he embarks his goods, he shall have a safe and gainful return? Dost thou foreknow, when thou eatest, it shall refresh thee? when thou takest physic, that it shall recover thy health, and save thy life? Yea, further, can the covetous man pretend a promise, that his unjust practices shall enrich him? the malicious, that he shall prosper in his design of revenge? the ambitious, that he shall be great and honourable? the voluptuous, that his pleasure shall be always unmixed with gall and wormwood? Can any say, they ever had a promise to ascertain them that profaneness and sensuality would bring them to heaven? that an ungodly, dissolute life would end in blessedness? Here the Lord knows men can be confident and active enough without a promise, and against many an express threatening. Wilt thou not upon the hope, thou hast before thee, do as much for thy soul, for eternal blessedness, as men do for uncertain riches, short pleasures, an airy, soon blasted name? yea, as much as men desperately do to damn themselves, and purchase their own swift destruction? Or canst thou pretend, though thou hast no pre-assuring promise, thou hast no hope? Is it nothing to have heard so much of God's gracious nature? Is it suitable to the reports and discoveries he hath made of himself, to let a poor wretch perish at his feet, that lies prostrate there, expecting his mercy? Didst thou ever hear he was so little a lover of souls? Do his giving his Son, his earnest unwearied strivings with sinners, his long patience, the clear beams of Gospel light, the amiable appearance of his grace, give ground for no better, no kinder thoughts of him? yea, hath he not expressly styled himself the God hearing prayers, taking a name on purpose to encourage [d] all flesh

[d] Psal. lxv. 2.

to come to him. Wilt thou dare then to adopt those profane words, [e] What profit is it to pray to him? and say, 'tis better to sit still, resolving to perish, than address to him, or seek his favour, because he hath not by promise assured thee of the issue, and that, if he suspend his grace, all thou dost will be in vain? How wouldst thou judge of the like resolution, if the husbandman should say, When I have spent my pains and cost in breaking up and preparing the earth, and casting in my seed; if the sun shine not, and the rain fall not in season, if the influences of heaven be suspended, if God withhold his blessing, or if an invading enemy anticipate my harvest, all I do and expend is to no purpose; and God hath not ascertained me of the contrary, by express promise; 'tis as good therefore sit still? Censure and answer him and thyself both together.

Doubt 4. But thou wilt yet, it may be, say, that though all this may be possible true, yet thou canst not all this while be convinced of any need so earnestly to busy thyself about this affair. For God is wont to surprise souls by preventing acts of grace, to be found of them that sought him not, to break in by an irresistible power, which they least thought of. And to go about to anticipate his grace, were to detract from the freeness, and so from the glory, of it.

Reply. But art thou not in all this afraid of charging God foolishly? When the merciful God, in compassion to the souls of men, hath given his Gospel; constituted and settled a standing office to be perpetuated through all ages for the publication of it; invited the world therein to a treaty with him, touching the concernments of their eternal peace; required so strictly their attendance to, and most serious consideration of his proposals and offers; encouraged and commanded their addresses to him, set up a throne of grace on purpose; wilt thou dare to say, all this is needless? When God speaks to thee, is it needless for thee to hear him, or regard what he saith? or when he commands thee to pour forth thy soul to him, wilt thou say, 'tis a needless thing? Dost thou not plainly see, that the peculiar, appropriate aptitude to the things pressed upon thee, speaks them [f] *necessary*, as *means* to their designed end; whence they are fitly called [g] means of grace? Is not the word of God the immortal seed? Are not souls begotten by that word to be the first-fruits of his

[e] Job xxi. 15. [f] Necessitas modii. [g] 1 Pet. i. 23. Jam. i. 18. Rom vi. 17. John xvii. 17.

creatures? Is it not the type, the mould, or print by which Divine impressions are put upon the soul; the instrument by which he sanctifies? Are not the exceeding great and precious promises, the *vehicula*, the *conveyancers* [h] of the Divine nature? And what can be the means to mollify and melt the obdurate heart of a sinner, to assuage its enmity, to overcome it into the love of God, to transform it into his image, but the gospel discovery of God's own gracious and holy nature? And can it operate to this purpose without being heard, or read, or understood, and considered, and taken to heart? Do but compare this means God works by, with the subject to be wrought upon, and the effect to be wrought, and nothing can be conceived more adequate and fitly corresponding. But inasmuch as there hath been an enmity between God and sinners, and that therefore the whole entire means of reconciliation must be a treaty; and that a treaty cannot be managed or conceived without mutual interlocution; therefore must the sinner have a way of expressing its own sense to God, as well as he speaks his mind to it; which shows the necessity of prayer too; and therefore, because the peace begins on his part, (though the war began on ours,) he calls upon sinners to open themselves to him; [i] Come now, let us reason together; he invites addresses; Seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is nigh, &c. And doth not the natural relation itself between the Creator and a creature require this, besides the exigency of our present case? Every creature is a supplicant; its necessary dependance is a natural prayer. The eyes of all things look up, &c. 'Tis the proper glory of a Deity to be depended on and addressed to. [k] Should not a people seek unto their God? 'Tis an appeal to reason; is it not a congruous thing?

Further, Dost thou not know thy maker's will [l] made known infers upon thee a *necessity of obeying*; unless thou think the breach between God and thee is better to be healed by rebellion; and that the only way to expiate wickedness, were to continue and multiply it. Is it a needless thing to comply with the will of him that gave thee breath and being? and whose power is so absolute over thee, as to all thy concernments, both of time and eternity? Again, while thou pretendest these things are needless, come now, speak out freely; what are the more necessary affairs wherein thou art so deeply engaged, that

h 2 Pet. i. i Isa. i. chap. lv. k Isa. viii. 19. l Necessitas præcepti.

thou canst not suffer a diversion? What, is the service and gratification of thy flesh and sense so important a business, that thou canst be at no leisure for that more needless work of saving thy soul? Where is thy reason and modesty? Dost thou mind none other, from day to day, but necessary affairs? Dost thou use, when thou art tempted to vain dalliances, empty discourses, intemperate indulgence to thy appetite, so to answer the temptation, Is it not necessary? Or art thou so destitute of all conscience and shame, to think it unnecessary to work out thy salvation, to strive to enter in at the strait gate that leads to life? but most indispensably necessary to be very critically curious about what thou shalt eat and drink, and put on; and how to spend thy time with greatest ease and pleasure to thy flesh, that it may not have the least cause to complain it is neglected? Thy pretence,[m] that God is wont to be found of them that sought him not, to the purpose thou intendest it, is a most ignorant or malicious abuse of Scripture. The prophet is, in that text, foretelling the calling of the Gentiles, who, while they remained such, did not ('tis true) inquire after God; but then he expressly tells us, (personating God,) I am sought of them that asked not for me, (that is, after the gospel came among them,) and then it is added, I am found (upon this seeking, plainly) of them that sought me not (*i. e.* who once in their former darkness, before I revealed myself in the Gospel dispensation to them, sought me not:) *q. d.* I am now sought of a people that lately sought me not, nor asked after me, and I am found of them. But what is this to thy case; whom God hath been, in the Gospel, earnestly inviting to seek after him, and thou all this while refusest to comply with the invitation?

And suppose thou hear of some rare instances of persons, suddenly snatched by the hand of grace out of the midst of their wickedness, as fire-brands out of the fire, is it therefore the safest course to go on in a manifest rebellion against God, till possibly he may do so by thee also? How many thousands may have dropped into hell since thou heardest of such an instance? as a worthy person speaks to that purpose.[n] If thou hast heard of one Elijah fed by ravens, and of some thousands by our Saviour's miracles, canst thou thence plead a repeal of that law to the world, They that will not labour shall not eat? Or is it a safer or wiser course to wait till food drop into thy

m Isa. lxv. 1. n Mr. Baxter.

mouth from heaven, than to use a prudent care for the maintenance of thy life? If thou say, thou hearest but of few that are wrought upon in this way, of their own foregoing expectation and endeavour; remember, (and let the thought of it startle thee,) that there are but few that are saved. And therefore are so few wrought upon in this way, because so few will be persuaded to it. But canst thou say, (though God hath not bound himself to the mere natural endeavours of his creature neither,) that ever any took this course, and persisted with faithful diligence, but they succeeded in it? What thou talkest of the freeness of God's grace, looks like a hypocritical pretence. Is there no way to honour his grace, but by affronting his authority? but to sin, that grace may abound? Sure grace will be better pleased by obedience, than by such sacrifice. For a miserable, perishing wretch, to use God's means to help itself, doth that look like merit? Is the beggar afraid thou shouldst interpret his coming to thy door and seeking thy alms, to signify, as if he thought he had deserved them? I hope thou wilt acknowledge thyself less than the least of all God's mercies, and that thou canst not deserve from him a morsel of bread; mayst thou not therefore in thy necessity labour for thy living, lest thou shouldst intrench upon the freeness of Divine bounty? With as much wisdom and reason mightst thou decline the use of all other means to preserve thy life, (which thou must owe always to free mercy,) to eat when thou art hungry, to take physic when thou art sick, lest thou shouldst intimate thyself to have merited the strength and health sought thereby. Nor can I think of any rational pretence that can more plausibly be insisted on, than these that have been thus briefly discussed. And it must needs be difficult to bring any appearance of reason for the patronage of so ill a cause, as the careless giving up of a man's soul to perish eternally, that is visibly capable of eternal blessedness. And certainly were we once apprehensive of the case, the attempt of disputing a man into such a resolution, would appear much more ridiculous, than if one should gravely urge arguments to all the neighbourhood, to persuade them to burn their houses, to put out their eyes, to kill their children, and cut their own throats. And sure, let all imaginable pretences be debated to their uttermost, and it will appear, that nothing withholds men from putting forth all their might in the endeavour of getting a spirit suitable to this blessedness, but an obstinately perverse and sluggish

heart, despoiled and naked of all show of reason and excuse. And though that be a hard task to reason against mere will, yet that being the way to make men willing, and the latter part of the work proposed in pursuance of this direction, I shall recommend only such considerations as the text itself will suggest, for the stirring up and persuading of slothful, reluctant hearts, choosing those as the most proper limits, and not being willing to be infinite herein, as amidst so great a variety of considerations to that purpose, one might.

That in general which I shall propose, shall be only the misery of the unrighteous; whereof we may take a view in the opposite blessedness here described. The contradictories whereto will afford a ° negative, the contraries a positive, description of this misery. So that each consideration will be double; which I shall now rather glance at than insist upon.

1. Consider then, If thou be found at last unqualified for this blessedness, how wilt thou bear it to be banished eternally from the blessed face of God? There will be those that shall behold that face in righteousness; so shalt not thou: the wicked is driven away in his wickedness, with a "Never more see my face." Again, What amazing visions wilt thou have! What ghastly, frightful objects to converse with, amidst those horrors of eternal darkness; when the devil and his angels shall be thy everlasting associates! What direful images shall those accursed, enraged spirits, and thy own fruitful parturient imagination, for ever entertain thee with, and present to thy view!

2. Is it a small thing with thee, to be destitute of all those inherent excellencies which the perfected image of God, whereof thou wast capable, comprehends? View them over in that (too defective) account some of the former pages gave thee of them. Thou art none of those bright stars, those sons of the morning, those blessed, glorified spirits thou mightest have been. But consider, What art thou? What shalt thou for ever be? What image or likeness shalt thou bear? Alas, poor wretch, thou art now a fiend? conformed to thy hellish partners; thou bearest their accursed likeness. Death is now finished in thee; and as thou sowedst to the flesh, thou reapest corruption. Thou art become a loathsome carcass; the worms that never die, abound in thy putrified, filthy soul,

° Pœna Damni—Sensus.

Thou hast a hell in thee. Thy venomous lusts are now grown mature, are in their full-grown state. If a world of iniquity, a fulness of deadly poison, tempered by hell-fire, is here sometimes to be found in a little member, what will there then be in all thy parts and powers?

3. Consider, how blessed a satisfaction dost thou lose? how pleasant and delightful a rest, arising both from the sight of so much glory, and so peaceful a temper and constitution of spirit? Here thou mightst have enjoyed an eternal undisturbed rest. But for rest and satisfaction, thou hast vexation and endless torment, both by what thou beholdest, and what thou feelest within thee. Thy dreadful visions shall not let thee rest: but the chiefest matter of thy disquiet and torment is in the very temper and constitution of thy soul. Thy horrid lusts are fuller of poisonous energy, and are destitute of their wonted objects, whence they turn all their power and fury upon thy miserable self. Thy enraged passions would fly in the face of God, but they spend themselves in tormenting the soul that bred them. Thy curses and blasphemies, the envenomed darts pointed at heaven, are reverberated and driven back into thy own heart. And therefore,

4. Consider, what awaking hast thou? Thou awakest not into the mild and cheerful light of that blessed day, wherein the saints of the Most High hold their solemn, joyful triumph. But thou awakest into that great and terrible day of the Lord, (dost thou desire it, for what end is it to thee?) a day of darkness, and not light; a gloomy and stormy day. The day of thy birth is not a more hateful than this is a dreadful day. Thou awakest and art beset with terrors, presently apprehended and dragged before thy glorious, severe Judge, and thence into eternal torments. O happy thou, mightst thou never awake, might the grave conceal, and its more silent darkness cover thee for ever. But since thou must awake then, how much more happy wert thou, if thou wouldst suffer thyself to be awakened now! What, to lose and endure so much, because thou wilt not now a little bestir thyself, and look about thee? Sure thy conscience tells thee, thou art urged but to what is possible, and lawful, and hopeful, and necessary. Methinks, if thou be a man, and not a stone, if thou hast a reasonable soul about thee, thou shouldst presently fall to work, and rather spend thy days in serious thoughts, and prayers, and tears, than run the

hazard of losing so transcendent a glory, and of suffering misery, which as now thou art little able to conceive, thou wilt then be less able to endure.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Rule 4. Directing to the endeavour of a gradual improvement in such a disposedness of spirit (as shall be found in any measure already attained) towards this blessedness. That 'tis blessedness begun which disposes to the consummate state of it. That we are therefore to endeavour the daily increase of our present knowledge of God, conformity to him, and the satisfiedness of our spirits therein.

4. *Rule.* THAT when we find ourselves in any disposition towards this blessedness, we endeavour a gradual improvement therein, to get the habitual temper of our spirits made daily more suitable to it. We must still remember we have not yet attained, and must therefore continue pressing forward [a] to this mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. That prize (not price, as we commonly mis-read it in our Bibles) of which the apostle here speaks, is (as may be seen by looking back to verse 8, 9, &c.) the same with the blessedness in the text. Such a knowledge of Christ, as should infer at last his participation with him in his state of glory; or of the resurrection of the dead. This is the ultimate term, the scope or end of that high calling of God in Christ; so 'tis also stated elsewhere. Who hath [b] called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus. Now we should therefore frequently recount how far short we are of this glory, and stir up our souls to more vigorous endeavours in order to it. Our suitableness to this blessedness stands in our having the elements and first principles of it in us; 'tis glory only that fits for glory; some previous sights and impressions of it, and a pleasant complacential relish thereof, that frame and attemper us by degrees to the full and consummate state of it. This is that therefore we must endeavour, A growing knowledge of God, conformity to him, and satisfiedness of spirit therein. What we expect should be one day perfect, we must labour may be, in the meantime, always growing.

1. Our knowledge of God. The knowledge of him I

a Phil. iii. 14. Βραβειον. b 1 Pet. v. 10.

here principally intend, is not notional and speculative, but (which is more ingredient to our blessedness, both inchoate and perfect) that of converse, that familiar knowledge which we usually express by the name of acquaintance. See that this knowledge of him be increased daily. Let us now use ourselves much with God. Our knowledge of him must aim at conformity to him; and how powerful a thing is converse in order hereto! How insensibly is it wont to transform men, and mould anew their spirits, language, garb, deportment! To be removed from the solitude or rudeness of the country to a city or university, what an alteration does it make? How is such a person divested by degrees of his rusticity, of his more uncomely and agrest manners! Objects we converse with, beget their image upon us;[c] They walked after vanity, and became vain, said Jeremiah; and Solomon,[d] He that walketh with the wise, shall be wise. Walking is a usual expression of converse. So to converse with the holy is the way to be holy, with heaven, the way to be heavenly, with God, the way to be God-like. Let us therefore make this our present business, much to acquaint ourselves with God. We count upon seeing him face to face, of being always in his presence beholding his glory; that speaketh very intimate acquaintance indeed. How shall we reach that pitch? What, to live now as strangers to him? Is that the way?[e] The path of the righteous is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The text shows us the righteous man's end, To behold the glory of God's face, &c. 'tis easy to apprehend then, his way must needs have in it a growing brightness, as he comes still nearer this end. Every nearer approach to a lucid thing infers (to us) an increase of light from it. We should therefore be following on to know the Lord, and we shall see his going forth will be before us as the morning.[f] He will be still visiting us with renewed, increasing light, (for such is morning-light, fresh and growing-light,) and ere long it will be perfect day. Labour we to improve our knowledge of God to such a degree of acquaintance as our present state can admit of: to be as inward with him as we can, to familiarize ourselves to him. His gospel aims at this, to make those that were afar off nigh. Far-distant objects we can have no distinct view of. He can give us little account of a person that hath only seen him afar off; so God beholds

c Jer. ii. 5. d Prov. xiii. 20. e Prov. iv. 18. f Hos. vi. 3.

the proud afar off, that is, he will have no acquaintance with them: whereas with the humble he will be familiar; *he will dwell* (as in a family) with them.[g] So the ungodly behold God till he bring them in, and make them nigh; then they are no longer strangers, but of his family and household, now thoroughly acquainted. Several notes there are of a thorough acquaintance which we should endeavour may concur in our acquaintance with God, in that analogy which the case will bear:—To know his *nature*; or (as we would speak of a man) what will please and displease him, so as to be able in the whole course of our daily conversation to approve ourselves to him: to have the skill so to manage our conversation, as to continue a correspondence, not interrupted by any of our offensive unpleasing demeanours: to walk worthy of God unto all well-pleasing. It concerns us most to study and endeavour this practical knowledge of the nature of God; what trust, and love, and fear, and purity, &c. his faithfulness and greatness, his goodness and holiness, &c. do challenge from us: what may in our daily walking be agreeable, what repugnant, to the several attributes of his being. To know his *secrets*; to be as it were of the cabinet-council.[h] (The word used by the Psalmist hath a peculiar significancy to that purpose; to signify, not only counsel, but a council, or the consessus of persons that consult together.) This is his gracious vouchsafement, to humble reverential souls. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; such acquaintance with him is to be sought, to know the (communicable) secrets both of his mind and heart. Of his mind; his truths, gospel-mysteries, that were kept secret from ages and generations. We have the mind of Christ. This is great inwardness. Of his heart; his love, his good-will, his kind bosom thoughts towards our souls. To know his *methods*, and the course of his dispensations towards the world, his church, and especially our own spirits. This is great knowledge of God, to have the skill to trace his footsteps, and observe by comparing times with times, that such a course he more usually holds; and accordingly, with great probability, collect from what we have seen and observed what we may expect. What order and succession there is of storms of wrath, to clouds of sin; and again of peaceful, lucid intervals, when such storms have inferred penitential tears. In what exigencies, and distresses, humble mourners may

[g] Isa. lvii. 15. [h] Psal. xxv. 14.

expect God's visits and consolations. To recount in how great extremities former experience hath taught us not to despair; and from such experience still to argue ourselves into fresh reviving hopes, when the state of things (whether public or private, outward or spiritual) seems forlorn. To know the proper seasons of address to him; and how to behave ourselves most acceptably in his presence, in what dispositions and postures of spirit we are fittest for his converse, so as to be able to come to him in a good hour, [i] in a time when he may be found. To know his *voice:* this discovers acquaintance. [k] The ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meats. God's righteous ones, that are filled with the fruits of righteousness, do proportionably abound in [l] *knowledge, and in all sense.* They have quick, naked, unvitiated senses, to discern between good and evil; yea, and can have the suffrage of several senses concerning the same object; they have a kind of taste in their ear. They taste the good word of God, even in his previous workings on them. Being new-born, they are intimated to have tasted in the word how gracious the Lord is. As they grow up thereby, they have still a more judicious sense,[m] and can more certainly distinguish, when God speaks to them, and when a stranger goes about to counterfeit his voice.[n] They can tell at first hearing, what is grateful and nutritive, what offensive and hurtful, to the divine life; what is harmonious and agreeable, what dissonant, to the gospel already received, so that an angel from heaven must expect no welcome, if he bring another. To know his inward *motions* and impulses; when his hand toucheth our hearts, to be able to say, This is the finger of God, there is something divine in this touch. [o] My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved. This speaks acquaintance, when the soul can say, I know his very touch; the least impression from him, I can distinguish it from thousands of objects that daily beat upon my heart. To understand his *looks;* to know the meaning of his aspects, and glances of the various casts, as it were, of his eye. [p] Such things intimate friends can, in a sort, talk by, with one another; I will guide thee by mine eye;

[i] Psal. xxxii. 6. [k] Job xii. 11.
[l] Phil. i. 9. *αισθητηρια γεγυμνασμενα.* Heb. v. ult. Heb. vi.
[m] 1 Pet. i. 2, 3. [n] John x. [o] Cant. v. 4.
[p] So we apprehend God proportionably more clearly, as the idea we have of a person is more distinct that we have of him by the sight of his picture or face through a glass, beyond that which we have by hearing a reported description of him, though by himself unseen. This is acquaintance with God.

that implies an intelligent teachable subject. We have now no full-eyed appearances of God; he shows himself, looks in upon us through the lattice, through a veil or a shadow, or a glass. That measure of acquaintance with him to be able to discern and own him in his appearances, is a great participation of heaven, utter unacquaintance with God is expressed by the denial of these two, Ye have neither heard his voice, nor seen his shape, John v. 37.

Finally, which brings us home to the text, to keep our eye intentively fixed on him, not to understand his looks only as before, but to return our own. Intimate acquaintance (when such friends meet) is much expressed and improved by the eye, by a reciprocation of glances, or (which speaks more inwardness) more fixed views; when their eyes do even feed and feast upon each other. Thus we should endeavour to be as in a continual interview with God. How frequent mention have we of the fixed posture of his eye towards saints. To this man will I look; I have found out, *q. d.* that which shall be ever the delight of mine eye, do not divert me. Towards him I will look. What he speaks of the material temple is ultimately to be referred to that which is typified, [q] his church, his saints, united with his Christ, Mine eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually; and elsewhere, He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous; he cannot (admirable grace) allow himself to look off, to turn aside his eye: and he seems impatient of the aversion of theirs, [r] Let me see thy countenance, (saith he,) for it is comely.

Is it not much more reasonable it should be thus with us towards him? that we should be more delighted to behold real comeliness than he with what is so, only by his gracious vouchsafement and estimation? How careful should we be, that our eye may at every turn meet his; that he never look toward us, and find it in the ends of the earth, carelessly wandering from him! How well doth it become us, [s] to set the Lord always before us; to have our eye ever towards the Lord! This you see is the initial, leading thing in this blessedness of heaven. So it must have also a prime ingrediency into our heaven on earth. It is a part of celestial blessedness; but it is not peculiar to it. The present blessedness the righteous enjoy here is a participation of heaven. It hath something in it of every thing that is ingredient into that perfect blessedness. Our

q 1 Kings ix. 3. Job xxxvi. 7. Psal. xxxiii. 18. and xxxiv. 15.
r Cant. ii. 14. s Psal. xvi. 8. xxv. 15.

present knowledge of God is often expressed by vision, or sight, as we have had occasion to observe in many passages of Scripture. He hath given us such a visive power, and made it connatural to that heavenly creature, begotten of him, in all the true subjects of his blessedness. † We know that we are of God, and presently it follows, He hath given us an understanding to know him that is true. This new man is not born blind. The blessed God himself is become liable to the view of his regenerate, intellectual eye, clarified, and filled with vigour and spirit from himself. He therefore that hath made, that hath new-formed this eye, shall not he be seen by it? shall not we turn it upon him? Why do not we more frequently bless our eye with that sight? This object (though of so high excellency and glory) will not hurt, but perfect and strengthen it. They are refreshing, vital beams that issue from it. Sure we have no excuse that we eye God so little, *i. e.* that we mind him no more. Why have we so few thoughts of him in a day? What, to let so much time pass, and not spare him a look, a thought? Do we intend to employ ourselves an eternity in the visions of God, and is our present aversion from him, and intention upon vanity, our best preparation thereto? This loudly calls for redress. Shall God be waiting all the day, as on purpose to catch our eye, to intercept a look, and we studiously decline him, and still look another way, as of choice? And what is it but choice? Can we pretend a necessity to forget him all the day? How cheap is the expense of a look! How little would it cost us! And yet how much of duty might it express? how much of comfort and joy might it bring into us!

How great is our offence and loss, that we live not in such more constant views of God! Herein we sin and suffer both at once, things both very unsuitable to heaven. Mindfulness of God is the living spring of all holy and pleasant affections and deportments towards him; sets all the wheels a going; makes the souls as the chariots of Aminadab. These wheels have their eyes also, are guided by mind, by an intellectual principle. Knowing, intelligent beings (as we also are by participation and according to our measure) so act mutually towards one another. We cannot move towards God but with an open eye, seeing him and our way towards him. If we close our eyes we stand still, or blindly run another course, we know not

† 1 John v. 19, 20.

whither. All sin is darkness, whether it be neglect of good, or doing of evil: its way is a way of darkness; as a course of holy motion is walking in the light. Our shutting our eyes towards God creates that darkness; surrounds us with a darkness comprehensive of all sin. Now is every thing of enjoined duty waived, and any evil done, that sinful nature prompts us to. Well might it be said, [u] He that sinneth hath not seen God. When we have made ourselves this darkness, we fall of course under Satan's empire, and are presently within his dominions. He is the prince of darkness, and can rule us now at his will. Perishing lost souls are such as in whom the god of this world hath blinded their minds.—To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, is, to turn them also from the power of Satan unto God. What a hell of wickedness are we brought into, in the twinkling of an eye! We are without God in the world, as if a man wink, though at noon-day he hath as it were put out the sun, 'tis with him as if there were no such thing. When we have banished God out of our sight and forgotten him, 'tis with us as if there were no God. If such a state grow habitual to us, (as we know every sinful aversion of our eye from God tends thereto,) what wickedness is there that will not lurk in this darkness? How often in Scripture is forgetting God used as a character, yea, as a paraphrase, a full, though summary expression of sin in general! as if the wickedness, the malignity, the very hell itself of sin, were wholly included (and not connoted only) here. [x] Now consider this, (after so dreadful an enumeration, so black a catalogue,) all that forget God. And (as deep calleth to deep, one hell to another,) [y] The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God. That heap, that mass of wickedness, of pride, of persecution, cursing, blasphemy, deceit, and mischief, all meet in one that hath not God in all his thoughts.

But who is so hardy to look the holy God in the face, and sin against him! What an astonishment is it, when he watches over present sin, or brings forth former sins out of secret darkness, and sets them in the light of his countenance! Who that understands any thing of the nature and majesty of God, dare call him for a witness of his sinning? The worst of men would find themselves under some restraint, could they but obtain of themselves, to sit down sometimes, and solemnly think of God. Much

[u] 1 John iii. 6. [x] Psal. l. [y] Psal. ix.

more would it prove an advantage to them, (whom I most intend,) such as sin within the nearer call and reach of mercy; that sin not to the utmost latitude; even such as lead the strictest lives, and are seldomer found to transgress. Are not their sins wont to begin with forgetting God? Did they eye God more, would they not sin less frequently, and with greater regret? You his saints, that have made a covenant with him by sacrifice, that profess the greatest love and devotedness to him, and seem willing yourselves to become sacrifices, and lay down your lives for his sake; what, is it a harder thing to give him a look, a thought! or is it not too common a thing, without necessity, (and then not without injury,) to withhold these from him? Let us bethink ourselves, are not the principal distempers of our spirits, and disorders yet observable in our lives, to be referred hither? As to enjoined services; what should we venture on omissions, if we had God in our eye? or serve him with so declining, backward hearts? Should we dare to let pass a day, in the even whereof we might write down, Nothing done for God this day? Or should we serve him as a hard master, with sluggish, despondent spirits? The apostle forbids servants to serve with eye-service, as men-pleasers; meaning they should eye men less, and God more. Sure, as to him, our service is not enough eye-service. We probably eye men more than we should; but we do not eye him enough. Hence such hanging of hands, such feebleness of knees, such laziness and indifferency, so little of an active zeal and laborious diligence, so little fervency of spirit in serving the Lord. Hence also such an aversion to hazardous services, such fear of attempting any thing (though never so apparent important duty) that may prove costly, or hath danger in it. We look not to him that is invisible. And as to forbidden things; should we be so proud, so passionate, so earthly, so sensual, if we had God more in view? should we so much seek ourselves, and indulge our own wills and humours, drive a design with such solicitude and intention of mind for our private interests? Should we walk at such a latitude, and more consult our own inclination than our rule, allow ourselves in so much vanity of conversation, did we mind God as we ought? And do we not sensibly punish ourselves in this neglect? What a dismal chaos is this world while we see not God in it! To live destitute of a Divine presence, to discern no beam of the heavenly glory; to go up and

down day by day, and perceive nothing of God, no glimmering, no appearance; this is disconsolate as well as sinful darkness. What can we make of creatures, what of the daily events of Providence, if we see not in them the glory of a Deity; if we do not contemplate and adore the Divine wisdom, power, and goodness, diffused every where? Our practical atheism, and inobservance of God, make the world become to us the region and shadow of death, states us as among ghosts and spectres, makes all things look with a ghastly face, imprints death upon every thing we see, encircles us with gloomy, dreadful shades, and with uncomfortable apparitions. To behold the tragical spectacles always in view, the violent lusts, the rapine and rage of some, the calamitous sufferings, the miseries and ruins of others; to hear every corner resounding with the insultations of the oppressor, and the mournful groans of the oppressed; what a painful continuing death were it to be in the world without God! At the best, all things were but a vanishing scene, an image seen in the dark. The creation a thing the fashion whereof were passing away, the whole contexture and system of Providence were mere confusion, without the least concinnity or order; religion an acknowledged trifle, a mere mockery! What, to wink ourselves into so much darkness and desolation, and by sealing up our eyes against the Divine light and glory, to confirm so formidable miseries upon our own souls! How dreadfully shall we herein revenge our own folly, in nullifying him to ourselves, who is the all in all! Sure there is little of heaven in all this! But if now we open our eyes upon that all-comprehending glory, apply them to a steady intuition of God, how heavenly a life shall we then live in the world! To have God always in view, as the director and end of all our actions; to make our eye crave leave of God, to consult him ere we adventure upon any thing, and implore his guidance and blessing; upon all occasions to direct our prayers to him and look up; to make our eye wait his commanding look, ready to receive all intimations of his will; this is an angelic life. To be as those ministers of his that are always ready to do his pleasure; to make our eye do him homage, and express our dependance and trust; to approve ourselves in every thing to him, and act as always in his presence, observing still how his eye observes us, and exposing ourselves willingly to its inspection and search, contented always he should see through and through us;

surely there is much of heaven in this life; so we should endeavour to live here. I cannot omit to give you this instruction in the words of a heathen.[z] *We ought*, (saith he) *so to live, as always within view, order our cogitations as if some one might or can look into the very inwards of our breast. For to what purpose is it, to hide any thing from man? from God nothing can be hid; he is continually present to our spirits, and comes amidst our inmost thoughts*, &c.

This is to walk in the light, amidst a serene, placid, mild light, that infuses no unquiet thoughts, admits no guilty fears, nothing that can disturb or annoy us. To eye God in all our comforts, and observe the smiling aspects of his face, when he dispenses them to us; to eye him in all our afflictions, and consider the paternal wisdom that instructs us in them; how would this increase our mercies, and mitigate our troubles! To eye him in all his creatures, and observe the various prints of the Creator's glory stamped upon them; with how lively a lustre would it clothe the world, and make every thing look with a pleasant face! What a heaven were it to look upon God, as filling all in all! and how sweetly would it, ere-while, raise our souls into some such sweet seraphic strains, [a] Holy, holy,—the whole earth is full of his glory! To eye him in his providences, and consider how all events are with infinite wisdom disposed into an apt subserviency to his holy will and ends; what difficulties would hence be solved! what seeming inconsistencies reconciled! and how much would it contribute to the ease and quiet of our minds! To eye him in his Christ, the express image of his person, the brightness of his glory; and in the Christian economy, the gospel revelation and ordinances, through which he manifests himself; to behold him in the posture wherein he saves souls, clad with the garments of salvation, girt with power, and apparelled with love, travelling in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save: to view him addressing himself to allure and win to him the hearts of sinners, when he discovers himself in Christ, upon that reconciling design, makes grace that brings salvation appear, teaching to deny ungodliness, &c. to behold him entering into human flesh, pitching his tabernacle among men, hanging out his ensigns of peace, laying his trains, spreading his net, the cords of a man, the bands of love: to see him in his Christ, ascending the cross, lifted

z Sic certe vivendum est tanquam in conspectu vivamus, &c. Sen. Epist. lxx. iii.

a Isa. vi. 2, 3.

up to draw all men to him; and consider that mighty love of justice and of souls, both so eminently conspicuous in that stupendous sacrifice; here to fix our eyes looking to Jesus, and beholding him whom we have pierced: to see his power and glory, as they were wont to be seen in his sanctuaries; to observe him in the solemnities of his worship, and the graceful postures wherein he holds communion with his saints, when he seats himself amidst them on the throne of grace, receives their addresses, dispenses the tokens and pledges of his love: into what transports might these visions put us every day!

Let us then stir up our drowsy souls, open our heavy eyes, and turn them upon God, inure and habituate them to a constant view of his (yet veiled) face, that we may not see him only by casual glances, but as those that seek his face, and make it our business to gain a thorough knowledge of him. But let us remember, that all our present visions of God must aim at a further conformity to him; they must design imitation, not the satisfying of curiosity: our looking must not therefore be an inquisitive, busy prying into the unrevealed things of God. Carefully abstain from such over-bold presumptuous looks. But remember, we are to eye God as our pattern. Wherein he is to be so, he hath plainly enough revealed and proposed himself to us. And consider, this is the pattern, both to which we ought and to which we shall be conformed, if we make it our business; so will sense of duty and hope of success concur to fix our eye and keep it steady. Especially, let us endeavour to manage and guide our eye aright, in beholding him, that our sight of him may most effectually subserve this design of being like him; and herein nothing will be more conducible, than that our looks be qualified with—reverence, and—love.

1. Let them be reverential looks. We shall never be careful to imitate a despised pattern, or that we think meanly of. When this is the intimate sense of our soul, Who is a God like unto thee in holiness? there is none holy as the Lord: this will set our powers on work; such sights will command and over-awe our souls into conformity to him. Subjects have sometimes affected to imitate the very imperfections and deformities of their adored prince. Let us greaten our thoughts of God. Look to him with a submissive, adoring eye. Let every look import worship and subjection. Who can stand before apprehended sovereign majesty with such a temper of soul as shall signify an affront

to it? This will make every thing as suitable to God, yield and render our souls susceptible of all divine and holy impressions.

2. Let them be friendly and (as far as may consist with that reverence) amorous looks. 'Tis natural to affect and endeavour likeness to them we love. Let love always sit in our eye, and inspirit it; this will represent God always amiable, will infinitely commend us to his nature and attributes, and even ravish us into his likeness. The loving spouse often glories to wear her beloved husband's picture on her breast. The love of God will much more make us affect to bear his image in our hearts. His law is a true representation of him, and *love* is the fulfilling of that law, an exemplification of it in ourselves. Love will never enter a quarrel, nor admit of any disagreement with God. His more terrible appearances will be commendable in the eye of love. It thinks no evil. But so interprets and comments upon his severer aspects, whether through his law, or providence, as to judge all amiable, and frame the soul to an answerable deportment.

2. In this way then let us endeavour a growing conformity unto God. It hath been much (and not unnecessarily) inculcated already, that the blessedness of the righteous hereafter, doth not consist merely in beholding an external, objective glory, but in being also glorified. They are happy by a participated glory; by being made like God, as well as seeing his glorious likeness; whereby the constitution of their spirits is changed and reduced to that excellent, harmonious, agreeable temper, that holy composure and peaceful state, from which blessedness is inseparable. As far as we are capable of blessedness in this world, it must be so with us here. Glory without us will not make us happy in heaven; much less will any thing without us make us happy on earth. 'Tis an idle dream, of sickly, crazy minds, that their blessedness consists in some external good, that is separable and distant from them; which therefore as they blindly guess, they uncertainly pursue; never aiming to become good, without which they can never know what it is to be blessed What felicity are men wont to imagine to themselves in this or that change of their outward condition! were their state such or such, then they were happy, and should desire no more. As the child's fancy suggests to it, if it were on the top of such a hill, it could touch the heavens, but when with much toil it hath got thither, it finds itself as far off as before. We

have a shorter and more compendious way to it, would we allow ourselves to understand it. A right temper of mind involves blessedness in itself; 'tis this only change we need to endeavour. We wear out our days in vanity and misery, while we neglect this work, and busy ourselves to catch a fugitive shadow, that hovers about us. It can never be well, till our own souls be a heaven to us, and blessedness be a domestic, a home dwelling inhabitant there. Till we get a settled principle of holy quietude into our own breasts, and become the sons of peace, with whom the peace of God may find entrance and abode; till we have that treasure within us, that may render us insensible of any dependence on a foreign good, or fear of a foreign evil. Shall that be the boast and glory of a philosopher only, I carry all my goods with me wherever I go? and that, A virtuous, good man, is liable to no hurt?[b] Seneca thinks "they discover a low spirit, that say, externals can add any thing (though but a very little) to the felicity of an honest mind; as if (saith he) men could not be content with the light of the sun without the help of a candle or a spark." And speaking of the constancy of the virtuous man, (saith he,) "They do ill that say, such an evil is tolerable to him, such a one intolerable, and that confine the greatness of his mind within certain bounds and limits. Adversity (he tells us) overcomes us, if it be not wholly overcome. Epicurus, (saith he,) the very patron of your sloth, acknowledges yet, that unhappy events can seldom disturb the mind of a virtuous person, (and he adds,) how had he almost uttered, the voice of a man! I pray, (saith he,) speak out a little more boldly, and say he is above them altogether."[c] Such apprehensions the more virtuous heathens have had of the efficacy and defensative power of moral goodness, however defective their notion might be of the thing itself. Hence Socrates the pagan martyr is reported to have cried out, (when those persons were persecuting him to death,) Anytus and Meletus can kill me, but they cannot hurt me. And Anaxarchus the philosopher, having sharply reproved Nicocreon, and being by him ordered to be beaten to death with iron mallets, bids, Strike on, strike on, thou mayest (saith he) [d] break in pieces this vessel of Anaxarchus, but Anaxarchus himself thou canst not touch.

b Epist. 82.
c Max. Tyr. dissert. 2. who adds, For a good man cannot receive detriment from an evil man.
d Diogen. Laert. Anaxarchus.

Shall Christianity here confess itself outvied? shall we, to the reproach of our religion, yield the day to pagan morality, and renew the occasion of the ancient complaint, *[g] that the faith of Christians is out-done by the heathen infidelity?* It is, I remember, the challenge of Cicilius in Minutius. "There is Socrates (saith he) the prince of wisdom, whosoever of you Christians is great enough to attempt it, let him imitate him if he can." Methinks we should be ambitious to tell the world in our lives, (for Christians should live great things, not speak them,[f]) that a greater than Socrates is here: to let them see in us our represented pattern: to show forth higher virtues than those of Socrates; even his, who hath called us out of darkness into his glorious and marvellous light. Certain it is, that the sacred oracles of the gospel set before us a more excellent pattern, and speak things not less magnificent, but much more modest and perspicuous; with less pomp of words they give us a much clearer account of a far more excellent temper of mind, and prescribe the direct and certain way of attaining it. (Do but view over the many passages of Scripture occasionally glanced at, Chap. 7.) But we grope as in the dark for blessedness; we stumble at noon-day as in the night, and wander as if we had no eyes; we mistake our business, and lay the scene of a happy state at a great distance from us, in things which we cannot reach, and which if we could it were to little purpose.

Not to speak of greater sensualists, (whom at present I have less in my eye,) is there not a more refined sort of persons, that neglecting the great business of inspecting, and labouring to better and improve their spirits, are wholly taken up about the affairs of another sphere; that are more solicitous for better times, for a better world, than better spirits; that seem to think that all the happiness they are capable of on earth, is bound up in this or that external state of things? Not that the care of all public concernments should be laid aside; least of all, a just solicitude for the church's welfare: but that should not be pretended, when our own interest is the one thing with us. And when we are really solicitous about the church's interests, we should state them aright. God designs the af-

g Non præstat fides quod præstitit infidelitas.
f As this author's expression is.

flictions of his people for their spiritual good, therefore that is a much greater good, than their exemption from suffering these evils; otherwise his means should eat up his end, and be more expensive than that will countervail; which were an imprudence no man of tolerable discretion would be guilty of. We should desire the outward prosperity of Sion, for it is a real good; but inasmuch as it hath in it the goodness, not of an *end*, but only (and that but sometimes neither) of a *means*; not a constant, but a mutual goodness; not a principal, but a lesser subordinate goodness; we must not desire it absolutely, nor chiefly, but with submissive limited desires. If our hearts are grieved to hear of the sufferings of the church of God in the world, but not of their sins; if we more sensibly regret, at any time, the persecutions and oppressions they undergo, than their spiritual distempers, their earthliness, pride, cold love to God, fervent animosities towards each other; it speaks an uninstructed carnal mind. We take no right measure of the interests of religion, or the church's welfare, and do most probably mistake ourselves as much in our judging of our own; and measure theirs by our own mistaken model.

And this is the mischievous cheat many put upon their own souls, and would obtrude too often upon others too; that overlooking the great design of the gospel, to transform men's spirits and change them into the Divine likeness, they think 'tis religion enough to espouse a party, and adopt an opinion; and then vogue themselves friends to religion according to the measure of their zeal for their own party or opinion; and give a very pregnant proof of that zeal, by magnifying or inveighing against the times, according as they favour or frown upon their empty, unspirited religion. It being indeed such (a secret consciousness whereof they herein bewray) as hath no other life in it, than what it owes to external favour and countenance. And therefore all public rebukes are justly apprehended mortal to it; whereas that substantial religion that adequately answers the design, and is animated by the spirit of the gospel, possesses the souls of them that own it, with a secure confidence, that it can live in any times, and hold their souls in life also. Hence they go on their way with a free unsolicitous cheerfulness, enjoying silently in their own bosoms that repose and rest which naturally results from a sound and well-composed temper of spirit. They

know their happiness depends upon nothing without them. That they hold it by a better tenure than that of the world's courtesy. They can be quiet in the midst of storms, and abound in the want of all things. They can in patience possess their own souls, and in them a vital spring of true pleasure, when they are driven out of all other possessions. They know the living sense of these words, That the good man is satisfied from himself: That to be spiritually-minded is life and peace: That nothing can harm them that are followers of the good: That the way to see good days, is to keep their tongues from evil, and their lips from speaking guile, to depart from evil and do good, to seek peace and pursue it. They cannot live in bad times; they carry that about them that will make the worst days good to them. Surely they can never be happy in the best times, that cannot be so in any. Outward prosperity is quite besides the purpose to a distempered soul; when nothing else troubles, it will torment itself. Besides, we cannot command at pleasure the benign aspects of the world, the smiles of the times; we may wait a life's-time, and still find the same adverse posture of things towards us from without. What dotage is it to place our blessedness in something to us impossible, that lies wholly out of our power; and in order whereto we have nothing to do, but sit down and wish; and either faintly hope, or ragingly despair? We cannot change times and seasons, nor alter the course of the world, create new heavens and new earth. Would we not think ourselves mocked, if God should command us these things in order to our being happy? 'Tis not our business, these are not the affairs of our own province (blessed be God 'tis not so large) further than as our bettering ourselves may conduce thereto, and this is that which we may do and ought, 'tis our proper work, in obedience and subordination to God as his instruments, to govern and cultivate our own spirits, to intend the affairs of that his kingdom in us, (where we are his authorized viceroys,) that consists in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. We can be benign to ourselves, if the world be not so to us; cherish and adorn our inward man; that though the outward man be exposed daily to perish, (which we cannot help, and therefore it concerns us not to take thought

ε Ἰδιωτου ϛασις και χαρακτηρ, ουδεποτε εξ εαυτου προσδοκα ωφελειαν η βλαβην, αλλ' απο των εξω φιλοσοφου ϛασις και χαρακτηρ, πασαν ωφελειαν και βλαβην εξ εαυτου προσδοκα. Epict.

about it,) the inward may be renewed day by day. We can take care that our souls may prosper, that through our oscitant neglect they be not left to languish and pine away in their own iniquities. They may be daily fed with the heavenly hidden manna, and with the fruits of the paradise of God; they may enjoy at home a continual feast, and with a holy freedom luxuriate in divine pleasures, the joys wherewith the strangers intermeddle not, if we be not unpropitious and unkind to ourselves.

And would we know wherein that sound and happy complexion of spirit lies, that hath so much of heaven in it: 'Tis a present gradual participation of the Divine likeness. It consists in being conformed to God; 'tis, as the moralist tells us,[h] *If one would give a short compendious model of it, such a temper of mind as becomes God;* or to give an account of it in his own words who prescribes it, and who is himself the highest pattern of this blessed frame,[i] 'Tis to be transformed in the renewing of our minds, so as to be able to prove what is the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God; that is, experimentally to find it in ourselves, impressed and wrought into our own spirits, so as to have the complacential relish and savour of its goodness, excellency, and pleasantness diffused through our souls. Where remember, this was written to such as were supposed saints; whence it must be understood, of a continued progressive transformation, a renewing of the inward man day by day (as is the apostle's expression elsewhere.) 'Tis a more perfect reception of the impress of God, revealing himself in the gospel; the growth and tendency of the new creature, begotten unto the eternal blessedness, towards its mature and most perfect state and stature in the fruition thereof.

And 'tis this I am now pressing; inasmuch as some account hath been already given (according as we can now imperfectly guess at it, and spell it out) what the constitution of the holy soul is in its glorified state, when it perfectly partakes the Divine likeness; that when we find in ourselves any principles and first elements of that blessed frame, we would endeavour the gradual improvement thereof, and be making towards that perfection. This therefore being our present work, let it be remembered wherein this participated likeness of God hath been said to consist,

h Denique ut breviter tibi formulam scribam; talis animis sapientis viri esse debet qualis Deum deceat. Sen. Epist.

i Rom. xii. 2.

and labour now the nearest approach to that pitch and state. Your measures must be taken from what is most perfect, come now as near it as you can, and as that pagan's advise is; [k] "If yet thou art not Socrates, however, live as one that would fain be Socrates." Though yet thou art not perfect, live as one that aims at it, and would be so. Only it must be considered, that the conformity to God, of our present state, is in extent larger and more comprehensive than that of our future; though it be unspeakably less perfect in degree. For there is no moral excellency (that we have any present knowledge of) belonging to our glorified state, which is not in some degree necessarily to be found in saints on earth. But there are some things which the exigency of our present state makes necessary to us here, which will not be so in the state of glory; repentance, faith, as it respects the Mediator, in order to our future happiness; patience of injuries, pity to the distressed, &c. These things, and whatsoever else, whose objects cease, must be understood to cease with them. In short, *here* is requisite all that moral good which concerns both our end and way; *there*, what concerns our end only.

Yet is the whole compass of that gracious frame of spirit, requisite in this our present state, all comprehended in conformity to God. Partly, inasmuch as some of these graces which will cease hereafter in their exercise, as not having objects to draw them forth into act, have their pattern in some communicable attributes of God, which will cease also, as to their denomination and exercise; their objects then ceasing too, as his patience towards sinners, his mercy to the miserable. Partly inasmuch as other of those graces now required in us, though they correspond to nothing in God that is capable of the same name, as faith in a Saviour, repentance of sin, (which can have no place in God,) they yet answer to something in his nature, that goes under other names; and is the reason wherefore he requires such things in us. He hath in his nature that faithfulness and all-sufficient fulness, that challenges our faith; and that hatred of sin, which challenges our repentance for it, having been guilty of it. His very nature obliges him to require those things from us, the state of our case being considered. So that the sum even of our present duty lies in receiving this entire impression of the Divine likeness (in some part invariably and eternally ne-

k Epictet..

cessary to us, in some part necessary with respect to our present state.) And herein is our present blessedness also involved. If therefore we have any design to better our condition in point of blessedness, it must be our business to endeavour after a fuller participation of that likeness, in all the particulars it comprehends. You can pitch your thoughts upon no part of it, which hath not an evident direct tendency to the repose and rest of your spirits. I shall commend only some few instances, that you may see how little reason and inducement a soul conformed to the holy will of God, hath to seek its comforts and contents elsewhere. Faith corresponds to the truth of God, as it respects divine revelations. How pleasant is it to give up our understandings to the conduct of so safe a guide; to the view of so admirable things as he reveals! It corresponds to his goodness, as it respects its offers. How delectable is it to be filling an empty soul from the Divine fulness? What pleasure attends the exercise of this faith towards the person of the Mediator, viewing him in all his glorious excellencies, receiving him in all his gracious communications by this eye and hand. How pleasant is it to exercise it in reference to another world! living by it in a daily prospect of eternity; in reference to this world, to live without care in a cheerful dependance on him that hath undertaken to care for us!

Repentance is that by which we become like the holy God; to whom our sin hath made us most unlike before. How sweet are kindly relentings, penitential tears, and the return of the soul to its God, and to a right mind! And who can conceive the ravishing pleasures of love to God! wherein we not only imitate, but intimately unite with him who is love itself. How pleasant to let our souls dissolve here, and flow into the ocean, the element of love! Our fear corresponds to his excellent greatness. And is not (as it is part of the new creature in us) a tormenting servile passion, but a due respectfulness and observance of God; and there is no mean pleasure in that holy awful seriousness unto which it composes and forms our spirits. Our humility, as it respects him, answers his high excellency; as it respects our own inferiors, his gracious condescension. How pleasant is it to fall before him! And how connatural and agreeable to a good spirit, to stoop low, upon any occasion to do good! Sincerity is a most God-like excellency; an imitation of his truth, as grounded in his all-sufficiency; which sets him above the neces-

sity or possibility of any advantage by collusion or deceit; and corresponds to his omnisciency and heart-searching eye. It heightens a man's spirit to a holy and generous boldness; makes him apprehend it beneath him to do an unworthy, dishonest action, that should need a palliation, or a concealment.[1] And gives him the continual pleasure of self-approbation to God, whom he chiefly studies and desires to please. Patience, a prime glory of the Divine Majesty, continues a man's possession of his own soul, his liberty, his dominion of himself. He is (if he can suffer nothing) a slave to his vilest and most sordid passions at home, his own base fear, and brutish anger, and effeminate grief, and to any man's lusts and humours besides that he apprehends can do him hurt. It keeps a man's soul in a peaceful calm, delivers him from (that most unnatural) self-torment, defeats the impotent malice of his most implacable enemy, who fain would vex him, but cannot. Justice, the great attribute of the judge of all the earth, as such; so far as the impression of it takes place among men, preserves the common peace of the world, and the private peace of each man in his own bosom, so that the former be not disturbed by doing of mutual injuries, nor the latter by the conscience of having done them. The brotherly love of fellow-Christians; the impression of that special love, which God bears to them all, admits them into one another's bosoms, and all the endearments and pleasures of a mutual communion. Love to enemies, the express image of our heavenly Father; by which we appear his children, begotten of him; overcomes evil by goodness, blunts the double edge of revenge; at least the sharper edge; (which is always towards the author of it;) secures ourselves from wounding impressions and resentments; turns keen anger into gentle pity; and substitutes mild pleasant forgiveness, in the room of the much uneasier thoughts and study of retaliation. Mercifulness toward the distressed, as our Father in heaven is merciful, heaps blessing upon our souls, and evidences our title to what we are to live by, the Divine mercy. A universal benignity and propension to do good to all: an imitation of the immense, diffusive goodness of God, is but kindness to ourselves, rewards itself by that greater pleasure is in

[1] As that noble Roman whom his architect (about to build him a house) promised to contrive it free from all his neighbours' inspection; he replies, Nay, if thou have any art in thee, build my house so that all may see what I do. Vell. Pat. p. 89.

giving than in receiving; and associates us with God in the blessedness of this work, as well as in the disposition to it; who exercises loving-kindness in the earth, because he delighteth therein.

Here are some of the μιμήματα τῆς Θείας ζωῆς, or *the things wherein consists that our conformity to the Divine nature and will, which is proper to our present state.* And now, who can estimate the blessedness of such a soul? Can (in a word) the state of that soul be unhappy that is full of the Holy Ghost, full of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, those blessed fruits of that blessed Spirit? Blessedness is connaturalized unto this soul; every thing doth its part, and all conspire to make it happy. This soul is a temple, a habitation of holiness. Here dwells a Deity in his glory. 'Tis a paradise, a garden of God. Here he walks and converses daily, delighted with its fragrant fruitfulness. He that hath those things and aboundeth, is not barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus: he is the sun, and the knowledge of him the quickening beams that cherish and ripen these fruits. But the soul that lacketh these things is a desert, a habitation of devils. Here is stupid, disconsolate infidelity, inflexible obstinacy and resolvedness for hell, hatred and contempt of the Sovereign Majesty; whom yet, its secret misgiving thoughts tell it, will be too hard for it at last. Here is swollen pride and giddy vain-glory, disguised hypocrisy and pining envy, raging wrath and ravenous avarice, with what you can imagine besides, leading to misery and desolation.

You have then some prospect of a happy temper of spirit. It can now be no difficulty to you, to frame an idea of it in your thoughts, to get a notional image (or this likeness in the notion of it) into your minds; but that will avail you little, if you have not the real image also; that is, your spirits really fashioned and formed according thereto: if having the knowledge of these things, (as the pagan moralist's expression, before mentioned, is of virtuous rules and precepts,) [m] they become not habitual to you, and your spirits be not transfigured in them. But now, I treat with such as are supposed to have some such real impressions, that they may be stirred up to endeavour a fur-

m Philosophia hæc dividitur in scientiam, et habitum animi, unam illam qui didicit et facienda ac vitanda præcepit nondum sapiens est, nisi in ea quæ didicit animus ejus transfiguratus est. Sen. ex Agrippa, Epist. 94.

ther perfecting of them. In order whereto, I shall add but this two-fold advice:

1. Be very careful that this living image (such you have been formerly told it is) may grow equally in every part. See that the impression of this likeness be entire, that it be not a maimed thing; if it be, God will never own it as his production. Integrity is the glory of a Christian; to be entire, lacking nothing. This is the soundness of heart that excludes a blushing consciousness and misgiving, exempts it from the fear of a shameful discovery. [n] Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, is paraphrased, by having respect to all God's commandments; to which is opposite, that being [o] partial in the law, spoken of by the prophet, by way of complaint concerning the priests of that time. A thing hateful in the eye of God, and as uncomfortable to ourselves, as to be without a leg or an arm. And see that it be preserved entire by a proportional and uniform growth, that fresh life and motion may daily appear in every limb of this heavenly new creature. How odious a deformity is it, when a show of moral virtues excludes godliness: And how much more odious (inasmuch as there is more impudent falsehood in it, and more dishonourable reflection upon God) when under a high pretence of godliness, any shall allow themselves in visible immorality? What, to be oppressive, envious, contentious, deceitful, proud, turbulent, wrathful, morose, malicious, fretful, and peevish, and yet a Christian? What serious person, that shall have no fairer representation of Christianity than such do give, would not be ready to say rather, *Sit anima mea cum philosophis, If this be Christian religion, give me honest paganism?* A Christian that hath received the proper, uniform, entire impress of the gospel of Christ, is the most meek, mild, calm, harmless thing in the world Never mention so venerable a name, if you will not be very jealous of the honour of it. Will you give God occasion to charge you, Wretch, I never had had this dishonour, if thou hadst never been called a Christian; thou art a Christian to no purpose, or to very bad; it does thee no good, and it injures me? But (which is more directly considerable as to our present purpose) the neglect and consequent decay of any gracious principle, infers a languor, a consumption and enfeeblement of all. Any such perverse disposition doth not affect that part only, is

[n] Psal. cxix. 6, 80. [o] Mal. ii. 9.

not only an impairment to the contrary gracious principle, but (as a cancer in some exterior part of the body) it gradually creeps up till it invade the vitals. Can the love of God live and grow in an unquiet, angry, uncharitable breast? Consider Jam. i. 26. 1 John iii. 17.

2. Be constantly intent upon this business of spiritual growth. Mind it as a design, make a solemn purposed business of it, your great daily business. You do not till your ground by chance, as a casual thing; but you do it industriously, and of set purpose. The apostle speaking of his own method of pursuing conformity to Christ, tells us, [p] he did, in comparison, count all things else loss and dog's meat; he threw every thing else aside. Then next he recounts with himself, how far short he was;[q] not as if I had already attained, &c. (where by the way he intimates, that to stand still, and give over further endeavours, implies that gross absurdity, as if we thought ourselves to have attained already, to be already perfect; are we not ashamed to seem so conceited of ourselves?) and then, [r] still as he did attain in this pursuit he forgot what was behind; and held on his course with fresh and constant vigour, still reaching forth and pressing onward towards his designed mark.

In this great business we, alas! seem to dream. He that hath been observed ten or twenty years ago to be proud, and covetous, or passionate, still remains so, and we apprehend not the incongruity of it. What, always learning, and yet never come to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, to the putting off the old man, and putting on the new? Who would meddle with any profession upon such terms, to be always doing and yet to do nothing? Surely it must be imputed to this, we design not, we do not seriously intend the perfecting of holiness, to make a real progress in our way and work, and to get still nearer heaven, as we draw nearer to the end of our days on earth. We too contentedly confine ourselves within certain limits, and aim not, as we should, at a spiritual excellency. This is the temper of many that have long trodden the path of (at least an external) religion; they will go but their own pace, and that within a self-prescribed round or circle. They perform their stated task of religious exercises, and shun the grosser vices of the time; and resolve never to go higher: much like the character that was once

[p] Phil. iii. 8. [q] Ver. 9, 10. [r] Ver. 12, 13.

given of a great man,[s] *that he followed not the more eminent virtues, and yet that he hated vice.* And 'tis a true censure that a [t] barbarian is said to have given of that middle temper, that dull indifferency: *What is equally distant from being the matter either of praise or punishment, is upon no terms to be accounted a virtue.* At least, we drive not on a design of growth and self-improvement in our spiritual states with that constancy we ought; we are off and on; our spirits are not steadily intent [u] we are unstable as water, how can we excel? God hath not put us, sure, upon so fruitless a task, wherein our utmost labour and diligence shall profit nothing. Therefore strive more vigorously, and pray with more earnest importunity. Consider and plead it with God, that he hath set before thee the hope of such a state, wherein thou art to be perfectly like him; and shalt thou (that must hereafter be like God) be now like a clod of earth? Thou art now a child begotten of him; and though thou art yet in the minority, yet may not somewhat be spared out of so fair an estate, hereafter designed for thee, as that thou mayst now live worthy of such a Father, and suitable to thy expected inheritance.

3. And now, a contented, satisfied temper of spirit, as I have told you, results from the other two; and will therefore follow, of course, upon growing knowledge of God, and conformity to him, as the latter of these also doth upon the former. Yea, 'tis a part of our conformity to God; but a part consequent to the impression of the things mentioned under the former head, as knowledge also is a part previous and antecedent thereto. 'Tis in the state of glory we see something superadded. The likeness impressed is pre-supposed; satisfaction follows thereupon. The case is so too in our present state; contentment is spoken of as a thing consequent and superadded; godliness with contentment: A satisfied contented spirit, when 'tis the result of godliness, (of the Divine image impressed,) is indeed great gain. Yet as to this I shall only say these two things.

1. Be distinct and explicit in the proposal of it as an end. Religion doth not brutify men, but make men more rational. Its business is to guide them to blessedness. It

s Tiberius. Neque enim eminentes virtutes sectabatur, et rursum vitia oderat. Tacit. Annal.

t Thespesion, Παν γαρ ο τιμης τε, και τιμωριας ισον αφεστηκεν, ουπω αρετη. Philostr. in vit. Apollon. Tyan.

u Gen. xlix. 4.

must, therefore, pitch their eyes upon it, as the mark and end they are to aim at, and hold them intent there. 'Tis ingenuous and honourable to God, that we should expressly avow it. We come to him for satisfaction to our spirits, not knowing whither else to apply ourselves. We turn our eyes upon him, we lay open our souls to receive impressions from him, for this very end. This is an explicit acknowledgment of him as God, our highest sovereign good.

2. Actually apply and accommodate divine visions and communications to this purpose. Say, "O my soul, now come, solace thyself in this appearance of God; come, take thy allowed pleasure in such exertions of God, as thou dost now experience in thyself." Recount thy happiness; think how great it is, how rich thou art; on purpose that thy spirit may grow more daily into a satisfied, contented frame. Often bethink thyself, What is the great God doing for me, that he thus reveals and imparts himself to my soul? O how great things do those present pledges pre-signify to me? that thou mayst still more and more like thy portion, and account it fallen in pleasant places, so as never to seek satisfaction in things of another kind; though thou must still continue expecting and desiring more of the same kind. And remember to this purpose, there cannot be a greater participation of the misery of hell before-hand, than a discontented spirit perpetually restless and weary of itself; nor of the blessedness of heaven, than in a well-pleased, satisfied, contented frame of spirit.

CHAPTER XIX.

Rule 5. Directing to raise our desires above the actual or possible attainments of this our present, and terminate them upon the future consummate state of blessedness. The rule explained and pressed by sundry considerations. Rule 6. That we add to a desirous pursuit, a joyful expectation of this blessedness, which is pursued in certain subordinate directions.

Rule 5. THAT notwithstanding all our present or possible attainments in this imperfect state on earth, we direct fervent vigorous desires towards the perfect and consummate state of glory itself; not designing to ourselves a

plenary satisfaction and rest in any thing on this side of it. That is, that forgetting what is behind, we reach forth not only to what is immediately before us, the next step to be taken; but that our eye and desire aim forward at the ultimate period of our race, terminate upon the eternal glory itself; and that not only as a measure, according to which we would some way proportion our present attainments, but as the very mark, which (itself) we would fain hit and reach home to. And that this be not only the habitual bent and tendency of our spirits; but that we keep up such desires, in frequent (and, as much as is possible) continual exercise. Yea, and that such actual desires be not only faint and sluggish wishes, but full of lively efficacy and vigour; in some measure proportionable to our last end and highest good; beyond and above which we neither esteem nor expect any other enjoyment. Whatsoever we may possibly attain to here, we should still be far from projecting to ourselves a state of rest on this side consummate glory, but still urge ourselves to a continual ascent; so as to mount above, not only all enjoyments of any other kind, but all degrees of enjoyment in this kind, that are beneath perfection.

Still it must be remembered, this is not the state of our final rest. The mass of glory is yet in reserve; we are not yet so high as the highest heavens. If we gain but the top of mount Tabor, we are apt to say, 'Tis good to be here, and forget the longer journey yet before us, loth to think of a further advance; when, were our spirits right, how far soever we may suppose ourselves to have attained, it would be matter of continual joy to us to think, high perfections are still attainable; that we are yet capable of greater things than what we have hitherto compassed; our souls can yet comprehend more. Nature intends what is most perfect in every creature; methinks the divine nature in the new creature, should not design lower, or cease aspiring, till it have attained its ultimate perfection, its culminating point; till grace turn into glory. Let us, therefore, Christians, bestir ourselves; let us open and turn our eyes upon the eternal glory. Let us view it well, and then demand of our own souls, why are our desires so faint and slothful? why do they so seldom pierce through the intervening distance, and reach home to what they professedly level at; so rarely touch this blessed mark? How can we forbear to be angry with ourselves, that so glorious an end should not more powerfully attract;

that our hearts should not more sensibly find themselves drawn, and all the powers of the soul be set on work by the attractive power of that glory? It certainly concerns us, not to sit still under so manifest a distemper. But if the proposal of the object, the discourse (all this while) of this blessed state, do not move us to make some further trials with ourselves, see what urging and reasoning with our souls, what rubbing and chafing our hearts will do And there is a two-fold trial we may in this kind make upon our spirits:—What the sense of *shame* will work with us; whether our hearts cannot be made sensible to suppose how vile and wretched a temper it is to be undesirous of glory. And then what sense of *praise* can effect, or what impression it may make upon us to consider the excellency and worth, the high reasonableness, of that temper and posture of soul which I am now persuading to, a continual desirousness of that blessed, glorious state.

1. As to the former: Let us bethink ourselves, Can we answer it to God or to our own souls, that we should indulge ourselves in a continual negligence of our eternal blessedness? a blessedness consisting in the vision and participation of the Divine glory? Have we been dreaming, all this while, that God hath been revealing to us this glorious state, and setting this lovely prospect before our eyes? Did it become us not to open our eyes while he was opening heaven to us, and representing the state which he designed to bring us to? or will we say, We have seen it and yet desire it not? Have we been deaf and dead while he hath been calling us into eternal glory? have all our senses been bound up all this while? Hath he been speaking all along to senseless statues, to stocks and stones, while he expected reasonable, living souls should have received the voice, and have returned an obedient, complying answer? And what answer could be expected to such a call (a call to his glory) below this; We desire it, Lord, we would fain be there. And if we say we have not been all this while asleep, we saw the light that shone upon us, we heard the voice that called to us; wherewith shall we then excuse ourselves, that our desires were not moved, that our souls were not presently in a flame? Was it then, that we thought all a mere fiction; that we durst not give credit to his word, when it brought us the report of the everlasting glory? Will we avow this? Is this that we will stand by? Or what else have we left to say? Have we a more plausible reason to

allege, that the discovery of such a glory moved us not to desire it, than that we believed it not? Sure this is the truth of our case. We should feel this heavenly fire always burning in our breasts, if our infidelity did not quench the coal. If we did believe, we could not but desire. But doth not the thoughts of this shake our very souls, and fill us with horror and trembling? We that should be turned into indignation, and ready to burn ourselves with our own flame, and all about us, if one should give us the lie; that we should dare to put the lie upon the *eternal truth:* upon him whose word gave stability and being to the world, who made and sustains all things by it! That awful word! That word that shivers rocks, and melts down mountains, that makes the animate creation tremble, that can in a moment blast all things, and dissolve the frame of heaven and earth (which in the meantime it upholds:) is that become with us fabulous, lying breath? Those God-breathed oracles, those heavenly records, which discover and describe this blessed state, are they false and foolish legends? Must that be pretended at last (if men durst) that is so totally void of all pretences? What should be the gain or advantage accruing to that eternal, all-sufficient Being? What accession should be made to that infinite self-fulness by deluding a worm? Were it consistent with his nature; what could be his design to put a cheat upon poor mortal dust? If thou dare not impute it to him; such a deception had a beginning, but what author canst thou imagine of it, or what end? Did it proceed from a good man or a bad? Could a good and honest mind form so horribly wicked a design, to impose a universal delusion and lie upon the world, in the name of the true and holy God? Or could a wicked mind frame a design so directly levelled against wickedness? Or is there any thing so aptly and naturally tending to form the world to sobriety, holiness, purity of conversation, as the discovery of this future state of glory? And since the belief of future felicity is known to obtain universally among men, who could be the author of so common a deception? If thou hadst the mind to impose a lie upon all the world, what course wouldst thou take? How wouldst thou lay the design? Or why dost thou in this case imagine, what thou knowest not how to imagine? And dost thou not without scruple believe many things of which thou never hadst so unquestionable evidence? Or must that faith, which is the foundation of thy religion

and eternal hopes, be the most suspected, shaking thing with thee; and have, of all other, the least stability and rootedness in thy soul? If thou canst not excuse thy infidelity, be ashamed of thy so cold and sluggish desires of this glorious state.

And doth it not argue a low, sordid spirit, not to desire and aim at the perfection thou art capable of; not to desire that blessedness which alone is suitable and satisfying to a reasonable and spiritual being? Bethink thyself a little; How low art thou sunk into the dirt of the earth! how art thou plunged into the miry ditch, that even thine own clothes might abhor thee! Is the Father of spirits thy father? is the world of spirits thy country? hast thou any relation to that heavenly progeny? art thou allied to that blessed family; and yet undesirous of the same blessedness? Canst thou savour nothing but what smells of the earth? Is nothing grateful to thy soul, but what is corrupted by so vicious and impure a tincture? Are all thy delights centred in a dunghill; and the polluted pleasures of a filthy world better to thee than the eternal visions and enjoyments of heaven? What, art thou all made of earth? Is thy soul stupified into a clod? Hast thou no sense with thee of any thing better and more excellent? Canst thou look upon no glorious thing with a pleased eye? Are things only desirable and lovely to thee, as they are deformed? O consider the corrupted, distempered state of thy spirit, and how vile a disposition it hath contracted to itself! Thine looks too like the *mundane* spirit; the spirit of the world. The apostle speaks of it [a] διακριτικῶς, *by way of distinction;* We have not received the spirit of the world, but the spirit that is from God, that we might know, or see (and no doubt 'tis desire that animates that eye; 'tis not bare speculative intuition and no more) the things freely given us of God. Surely he whose desire doth not guide his eye to the beholding of those things, hath received the spirit of the world only. A spirit that conforms him to this world, makes him think only thoughts of this world, and drive the designs of this world, and speak the language of this world. A spirit that connaturalizes him to the world, makes him of a temper suitable to it: he breathes only worldly breath, carries a worldly aspect, is of a worldly conversation. O poor low spirit, that such a world should withhold thee from the desire and pursuit of such glory! Art thou not ashamed to think

[a] 1 Cor. ii. 12. εἰδῶμεν.

what thy desires are wont to pitch upon, while they decline and waive this blessedness? Methinks thy very shame should compel thee to quit the name of a saint or a man: to forbear numbering thyself with any that pretend to immortality, and go seek pasture among the beasts of the field, with them that live that low, animal life that thou dost, and expect no other.

And when thou so fallest in with the world, how highly dost thou gratify the pretending and usurping god of it! The great fomenter of the sensual, worldly genius;[b] the spirit itself that works in the children of disobedience, and makes them follow the course of the world, holds them fast bound in worldly lusts, and leads them captive at his will; causes them (after his own serpentine manner) to creep and crawl in the dust of the earth. He is most intimate to this apostate world; informs it (as it were) and actuates it in every part; is even one great soul to it. [c] The whole world lies in that wicked one; as the body, by the best philosophers, is said to be in the soul. The world is said to be [d] convicted when he is judged. He having fallen from a state of blessedness in God, hath involved the world with himself in the same apostacy and condemnation; and labours to keep them fast in the bands of death. The great Redeemer of souls makes this his business, [e] to loose and dissolve the work of the devil. With that wicked one thou compliest against thy own soul and the Redeemer of it, while thou neglectest to desire and pursue this blessedness. This is thy debasement, and his triumph; the vile succumbency gives him the day and his will upon thee. He desires no more than that he may suppress in thee all heavenly desires, and keep thee thus a slave and a prisoner (confined in thy spirit to this low, dark dungeon) by thy own consent. While thou remainest without desire after heaven, he is secure of thee, as knowing then thou wilt take no other way, but what will bring thee unto the same eternal state with himself in the end. He is jealous over thee, that thou direct not a desire nor glance an eye heaven-ward. While thou dost not so, thou art entirely subject, and givest as full obedience to him, as thy God requires to himself in order to thy blessedness. But is it a thing tolerable to thy thoughts, that thou shouldst yield that heart-obedience to the devil against God? And this being the state of thy case, what more significant expression canst thou make of the con-

b Eph. ii. 2, 3. c 1 John v. 19. d John xvi. e 1 John iii. 8.

tempt of Divine goodness? O the love that thou neglectest, while the most glorious issue and product of it is with thee an undesired thing! Yea, this the thing itself speaks, were there no such competition. What, that when eternal love hath conceived, and is travailing to bring forth such a birth; that when it invites thee to an expectation of such glory shortly to be revealed, the result of so deep counsels and wonderful works, this should be the return from thee, I desire it not? Is this thy gratitude to the Father of glory, the requital of the kindness, yea, and of the blood, of thy Redeemer? If this blessedness were not desirable for itself, methinks the offerer's hand should be a sufficient endearment. But thou canst not so divide or abstract, it consists in beholding and bearing his glorious likeness who invites thee to it; and therefore in the neglect of it thou most highly affrontest him.

Yea, further, is it not a monstrous unnaturalness towards thyself, as well as impiety towards God, not to desire that perfect, final blessedness? Doth not every thing naturally tend to its ultimate perfection and proper end? What creature would not witness against thee, if thou neglect, in thine own capacity and kind, to aim at thine? Surely thou canst not allow thyself to think any thing beneath *this*, worthy to be owned by thee, under that notion, of thy highest good and thy last end. But that thy spirit should labour under an aversion towards thy highest good, towards thy blessedness itself, is not that a dismal token upon thee? If thou didst disaffect and nauseate the things in which thy present life is bound up, and without which thou canst not live, wouldst thou not think thy case deplorate? What dost thou think will become of thy soul, whose everlasting life is bound up in that very good which thou desirest not; which cannot live that life without that good, nor with it, if thou hast no desire to it? O the eternal resentments thy soul will have of this cruelty! to be withheld from that wherein its life lies! Wouldst thou not judge him unnatural that should kill his brother, assassin his father, starve his child? What shall be said of him that destroys himself? How may that soul lament that ever it was thine; and say, O that I had rather been of any such lower kind, to have animated a fly, to have inspirited a vile worm, rather than to have served a reasonable beast, that by me knew the good it would never follow, and did not desire! But if thou hast any such desires, in a low degree, after this blessedness, as thou thinkest may entitle

thee to the name thou bearest, of a saint, a Christian; is it not still very unnatural to pursue a good, approved by thy stated judgment as best in itself, and for thee, with so unproportionable, so slothful desires? For the same reason thou dost desire it at all, thou shouldst desire it much; yea, and still more and more, till thou attain it, and be swallowed up into it. Thy best and last good thou canst never desire too much. And let it be considered by thee, that the temper thou thinkest thyself innocent of, an habitual prevalent disaffection to the true blessedness of saints, may for ought thou knowest be upon thee; while it appears thou art so very near the borders of it; and it appears not with such certainty that thou partakest not in it. It is not so easy a matter, critically to distinguish and conclude of the lowest degree (in *hypothesi*, or with application to thy own case) of that desire which is necessary to qualify thee for the enjoyment of this blessedness. And is it not a matter both of shame and terror, that thou shouldst desire thy blessedness so faintly, as not to know whether thou truly desire it at all. 'Tis true, that a certainty, amongst such as may be sincere, is very little common; but whence proceeds it, but from their too common, indulged sloth; out of which all this is designed to awaken thee. And the commonness whereof doth as little detract from the reproach and sinfulness, as from the danger of it. 'Tis but a poor defence, for what is intrinsically evil in itself, that it is common.

But further, as the case is, this is so reproachful a thing, even in common estimate,—not to desire heaven and eternal glory, or to desire it with very cold and careless desires —that there are few will profess it, or own it to be their temper; much fewer that will undertake to excuse or justify it. 'Tis so evilly thought of, that among merely sober and rational men, it can never find an advocate, or any that will afford it patronage. The generality pretend a desire of going to heaven, and being with God. If any be so observant of themselves as to know, and so ingenuous as to confess it otherwise with them, they complain of it as their fault, and say, they would fain have it redressed, but are far from assuming that confidence, to defend or plead for it. Consider then, wilt thou persist in such a temper and disposition of mind as all men condemn; and be guilty of so odious a thing, as shall be censured and blamed by the common concurrent vote and judgment of mankind? Thou wouldst be ashamed to stand forth and

profess openly to men, that thou desirest an earthly felicity more than a blessedness in heaven; or at least, that thou art so indifferent, and the scales hang so even with thee, that thou canst hardly tell which way they incline most. And art thou not ashamed that this should be thy usual temper; how much soever thou conceal it from the notice and observation of the world? Moreover, how can it escape thy serious reflection, that if thou pretend it otherwise with thee, 'tis but to add one sin to another, and cover thy carnality with hypocrisy and dissimulation? Yea, while thou continuest in that temper of spirit, not to desire this blessedness as thy supreme end, the whole of thy religion is but an empty show, an artificial disguise; it carries an appearance and pretence, as if thou wast aiming at God and glory, while thy heart is set another way, and the bent of thy soul secretly carries thee a countercourse. Hath not religion an aspect towards blessedness? What mean thy praying, thy hearing, thy sacramental communion, if thou have not a design for eternal glory? What makest thou in this way, if thou have not thy heart set towards this end?

Nor is it more dishonest and unjust, than it is foolish and absurd, that the disposition and tendency of thy soul should be directly contrary to the only design of the religion thou professest and doth externally practise. Thy profession and desires are nothing but self-contradiction. Thou art continually running counter to thyself; outwardly pursuing what thou inwardly declinest. Thy real end (which can be no other than what thou really desirest and settest thy heart upon) and thy visible way are quite contrary: so that while thou continuest the course of religion, in which thou art engaged, having taken down from before thine eyes the end which thou shouldst be aiming at, and which alone religion can aptly subserve, thy religion hath no design or end at all, none at least which thou wouldst not be ashamed to profess and own. Indeed this temper of heart I am now pleading against, an undesirousness or indifferency of spirit towards the eternal glory, renders religion the vainest thing in the world. For whereas all the other actions of our lives have their stated, proper ends, religion hath in this case none at all; none to which it hath any designation in this nature, or any aptness to subserve. This monstrous absurdity it infers, (and how strange is it, that it should not be reflected on?) That whereas if you ask any man of common understanding, what he doth

this or that action for, especially if they be stated actions, done by him in an ordinary course, he can readily tell you, for such and such an end: but ask him why he continues any practice of religion, he cannot say (in this case) for what. For can any man imagine what other end religion naturally serves for, but to bring men to blessedness? Which being no other thing than what hath been here described; such as are found not to desire it really and supremely, as their end, can have no real attainable end of their being religious at all. To drive on a continued course and series of actions in a visible pursuit of that which they desire not, and have no mind to, is such a piece of folly, so fond and vain a trifling, that as I remember Cicero reports Cato to have said concerning the soothsayers of his time, he did wonder they could look in one another's faces and not laugh; (being conscious to each other's impostures, and the vanity of their profession;) so one would as justly wonder that the generality of carnal men (who may shrewdly guess at the temper of one another's minds,) do not laugh at each other, that they are jointly engaged in such exercises of religion, to the design whereof the common and agreed temper of their spirits do so little correspond. As if all were in very good earnest for heaven, when each one knows for himself, and may (possibly with more truth than charity) suppose of the rest, that if they might always continue in their earthly stations, they had rather never come there. And therefore that they desire it not supremely, and so not as their end at all; consider it then, that thy no-desire of this blessed state quite dispirits thy religion, utterly ravishes away its soul, leaves it a dead, foolish, vain thing, renders it an idle impertinency, not a mean to a valuable end. This desire is the life of religion; all duties and exercises of piety are without it, but empty formalities, solemn pieces of pageantry; every service done to God, but the sacrifice of a fool, if not animated by the desire of final blessedness in him, and be not part of our way thither, a means designed to the attainment of it; which nothing can be, that we are not put upon by the virtue of the desired end. Without this, religion is not itself. A continuance in well-doing is as it were the body of it; and therein a seeking honour, glory, and immortality, the soul and spirit. The desire of a heavenly country must run through the whole course of our earthly pilgrimage: it were otherwise a continued error, an uncertain wandering, no steady tending towards our

end: so that thou art a mere vagrant, if this desire do not direct thy course towards thy Father's house. And methinks all this should make thee even ashamed of thyself, if thou canst not find this desire to have a settled residence, and a ruling power in thy soul. Then,

2. Sense of praise should signify something too, as the apostle, Whatsoever things are—pure, lovely, &c. If there be any virtue,—any praise, think of these things. And hath not the eternal glory those characters upon it of purity and loveliness beyond all things? Is it not a laudable and praiseworthy thing, to have a heart and mind set upon that? The blessed God puts a note of excellency upon this temper of spirit: [f] But they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, &c. This renders them a people worthy of him who hath called them to his kingdom and glory; [g] fit for him to own a relation to. Had they been of low, terrene spirits, he would have accounted it a shame to him, to have gone under the name and cognizance of their God. But inasmuch as they desire the heavenly country, have learned to trample this terrestrial world, cannot be contained within this lower sphere, nor satisfy themselves in earthly things; they now discover a certain excellency of spirit, in respect whereof, God is not ashamed to own a relation to them, before all the world to be called their God; to let men see what account he makes of such a spirit. Yea, this is the proper, genuine spirit and temper of a saint, which agrees to him as he is such. He is begotten to the eternal inheritance. A disposition (and therein a desire) to it is in his very nature, (the new nature he hath received,) implanted there from his original. He is born spirit of Spirit, and by that birth is not entitled only, but adapted and suited also to that pure and spiritual state of blessedness. That grace, by the appearance whereof men are made Christians, teaches also, instructs to this very thing, to look for this blessed hope, the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; that which you know consummates that blessedness. For when Christ, who is their life, shall appear, then shall they also appear with him in glory; by the participation of the divine nature, their spirits escape and get up above this corrupt, impure world. That new nature is a holy flame that carries their hearts upwards towards heaven.

[f] Heb. xi. 16. [g] 1 Thess. ii. 12.

Further, such desires appear hence to be of divine original, an infusion from the blessed God himself. That nature is from him immediately in which they are implanted. The apostle speaking of his earnest, panting desire [h] to have mortality swallowed up of life, presently adds, He that wrought us to the self-same thing is God. They are obedient desires; the soul's present answer [i] to the heavenly call, by which God calls it to his kingdom and glory. [k] This glory is (as hath been formerly noted) the very term of that calling. [l] The God of all grace hath called us into his eternal glory, by Christ Jesus. The glorified state is [m] the mark, the prize of the high calling of God in Christ. 'Tis the matter of the apostle's thanksgiving unto God, on the behalf of the Thessalonians, that [n] they were called by his Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. When the soul desires this glory, it obediently answers this call. This is a compliance and subjection of heart to it. How lovely and becoming a thing is this, when God touches the heart with a stamp and impress of glory, and it forthwith turns itself to that very point, and stands directly bent towards the state of glory; is not wayward or perverse, but herein yields itself to God, and complies with the Divine pleasure. Such desires have much in them of a child-like ingenuity; to desire the sight of a father's face; when this is the intimate sense of the soul, Show me the Father and it suffices. To desire the fullest conformity to his nature and will, to be perfect as that heavenly Father is perfect, what doth better become a child? They are generous desires; they aim at perfection, the highest that created nature is capable of; not contented to have had some glances of Divine glory, some strokes and lines of his image, but aspiring to full-eyed visions, a perfect likeness. They are victorious desires; they (as it were) ride in triumph over the world and every sublunary thing; they must be supposed to have conquered sensual inclinations, to have got the mastery over terrene dispositions and affections. With what holy contempt and scorn of every earthly thing doth that lofty soul quit this dirty world and ascend, that is powerfully carried by its own desire towards that blessed state? The desire of such a knowledge of Christ, as might transform into his likeness, and pass the soul through all degrees

h 2 Cor. v. 4.
i Heb. iii. 1.
k 1 Thess. ii. 12.
l 1 Pet. v. 15.
m Phil. iii. 14.
n 2 Thess. ii. 12.

of conformity to him, till it attain the resurrection of the dead, and become like a risen, glorified Jesus; such a desire I say, if it make all things seem as loss and dung in comparison, (even a formal, spiritless religion itself,) will it not render this world the most despicable dunghill of all the rest? Try such a soul if you can, tempt it down to enjoy a flattering, kind world, or to please it when angry and unkind. When desires after this glory are once awakened into an active, lively vigour, when the fire is kindled, and the flame ascends, and this refined spirit is joyfully ascending therein, see if you can draw it back, and make it believe this world a more regardable thing. Why should not all those considerations make thee in love with this blessed frame of spirit, and restless till thou find thyself incapable of being satisfied with any thing but divine likeness?

6. *Rule.* That while we cannot as yet attain the mark and end of our desires, we yield not to a comfortless despondency in the way, but maintain in our hearts a lively joy, in the hope that hereafter we shall attain it. We are not all this while persuading to the desire and pursuit of an unattainable good. Spiritual desires are also rational, and do therefore involve hope with them; and that hope ought to infer and cherish joy. Hopeless desire is full of torment, and must needs banish joy from that breast which it hath got the possession of. 'Tis a disconsolate thing, to desire what we must never expect to enjoy, and are utterly unlikely ever to compass. But these desires are part of the new creature, which is not of such a composition, as to have a principle of endless trouble and disquiet in itself. The Father of mercies is not so little merciful to his own child, to lay it under a necessity, from its very natural constitution, of being for ever miserable by the desire of that which it can never have. It had been very unlike the workmanship of God, to make a creature to which it should be necessary to desire, and impossible to enjoy the same thing. No; but as he has given holy souls, (as to the present case,) great incentives of desire, so doth he afford them proportionable encouragement of hope also; and that hope intervening, can very well reconcile desire and joy, and lodge them together in the same bosom. So that as it is a thing capable of no excuse, to hear of this blessedness and not desire it; so it would be, to desire and not expect it, to expect it, and not rejoice in it, even while we are under that expectation. And it must be a very

raised joy that shall answer to the expectation of so great things. If one should give a stranger to Christianity an account of the Christian hopes, and tell him what they expect to be and enjoy, ere long; he would sure promise himself, to find so many angels dwelling in human flesh, and reckon when he came among them he should be as amidst the heavenly choir; every one full of joy and praise. He would expect to find us living on earth, as the inhabitants of heaven, as so many pieces of immortal glory lately dropped down from above, and shortly again returning thither. He would look to find, every where in the Christian world, incarnate glory sparkling through the over-shadowing veil; and wonder how this earthly sphere should be able to contain so many great souls. But when he draws nearer to us, and observes the course and carriage of our lives, when he sees us walk as other men, and considers the strange disagreement of our daily conversation to our so great, avowed hopes, and how little sense of joy and pleasure we discover ourselves to conceive in them; would he not be ready to say, "Sure some or other (willing only to amuse the world with the noise of strange things) have composed a religion for these men, which they themselves understand nothing of. If they do adopt and own it for theirs, they understand not their own pretences; they are taught to speak some big words, or to give a faint or seeming assent to such as speak them in their names, but 'tis impossible they should be in good earnest, or believe themselves in what they say and profess." And what reply then should we be able to make? For who can think that any who acknowledge a God, and understand at all what that name imports, should value at so low a rate, as we (visibly) do, the eternal fruition of his glory, and a present sonship to him, the pledge of so great a hope. He that is born heir to great honours and possessions, though he be upon great uncertainties as to the enjoyment of them, (for how many interveniences may prevent him!) yet when he come to understand his possibilities and expectancies, how big doth he look and speak! what grandeur doth he put on! His hopes form his spirit and deportment. But is it proportionably so with us? Do our hopes fill our hearts with joy, our mouths with praise, and clothe our faces with a cheerful aspect, and make a holy alacrity appear in all our conversations?

But let not the design of this discourse be mistaken. 'Tis not a presumptuous confidence I would encourage, nor a

vain ostentation, nor a disdainful over-looking of others whom we fancy ourselves to excel. Such things hold no proportion with a Christian spirit. His is a modest, humble exultation; a serious, severe joy; suitable to his solid, stable hope. His spirit is not puffed up and swollen with air, it is not big by an inflation, or a light and windy tumour, but 'tis really filled with effectual pre-apprehensions of a weighty glory. His joy accordingly exerts itself with a steady, lively vigour, equally removed from vain lightness and stupidity, from conceitedness, and insensibleness of his blessed state. He forgets not that he is less than the least of God's mercies, but disowns not his title to the greatest of them. He abases himself to the dust, in the sense of his own vileness; but in the admiration of Divine grace, he rises as high as heaven. In his humiliation he affects to equal himself with worms, in his joy and praise, with angels. He is never unwilling to diminish himself, but afraid of detracting any thing from the love of God, or the issues of that love. But most of all he magnifies (as he hath cause) this its last and most perfect issue. And by how much he apprehends his own unworthiness, he is the more wrapt up into a wonderful joy, that such blessedness should be his designed portion. But now, how little do we find in ourselves of this blessed frame of spirit! How remote are we from it! Let us but inquire a little into our own souls: are there not too apparent symptoms with us of the little joy we take in the fore-thoughts of future blessedness? For,

First, How few thoughts have we of it! What any delight in, they remember often. 'Tis said of the same person, that [o] his delight is in the law of the Lord, and that in his law he doth meditate day and night. And when the Psalmist professes his own delight in God's statutes, he adds, [p] I will not forget thy word. Should we not be as unapt to forget heaven, if our delight were there? But do not days pass with us, wherein we can allow ourselves no leisure to mind the eternal glory; when yet vanities throng in upon us, without any obstruction or check? And (what is consequent hereupon) how seldom is this blessed state the subject of our discourse! How often do Christians meet, and not a word of heaven! O heavy, carnal hearts! Our home and eternal blessedness in this, appears to be forgotten among us. How often may a person converse

o Psal. i. 2.
p Psal. cxix. 16.

with us, ere he understood our relation to the heavenly country! If exiles meet in a foreign land, what pleasant discourse have they of home! They suffer not one another to forget it. Such was their remembrance of Sion, who sat together bemoaning themselves by the rivers of Babylon, a making mention of it, as the phrase is often used. And methinks (even as to this remembrance) it should be our own common resolution too; If we forget thee, O Jerusalem; if we forget to make mention of thee, O thou city of the living God; let our right hand forget her cunning; our tongue shall sooner cleave to the roof of our mouth: and so it would be, did we prefer that heavenly Jerusalem above our chief joy.

Again, How little doth it weigh with us! It serves not to outweigh the smallest trouble; if we have not our carnal desire in every thing gratified, if any thing fall out cross to our inclinations, this glory goes for nothing with us. Our discontents swallow up our hopes and joys; and heaven is reckoned as a thing of nought. If when outward troubles afflict or threaten us, we could have the certain prospect of better days, that would sensibly revive and please us. Yea, can we not please ourselves with very uncertain groundless hopes of this kind, without promise or valuable reason? But to be told of a recompense at the resurrection of the just, of a day when we shall see the face of God, and be satisfied with his likeness; this is insipid and without savor to us, and affords us but cold comfort. The uncertain things of time signify more with us than the certain things of eternity. Can we think 'tis all this while well with us? Can we think this a tolerable evil, or suffer with patience such a distemper of spirit? Methinks it should make us even weary of ourselves, and solicitous for an effectual, speedy redress.

The redress must be more in our own doing (striving with our souls and with God for them) than in what any man can say. Most of the considerations under that foregoing rule, are with little variation applicable to this present purpose. I shall here annex only some few subordinate directions; which may lead us into this blessed state of life, and give us some joyful foretastes of the future blessedness, according as our spirits shall comply with them. But expect not to be cured by prescriptions, without using them; or that heavenly joy can be the creature of mortal, unregarded breath; we can only prescribe means and methods through which God may be pleased to

descend, and in which thou art diligently to insist and wait. And because I cannot well suppose thee ignorant, where much is said to this purpose, I shall therefore say little.

1. Possess thy soul with the apprehension, that thou art not at liberty in this matter; but that there is a certain spiritual delectation, which is incumbent on thee as indispensable duty. Some, whose morose tempers do more estrange them from delights, think themselves more especially concerned, to banish every thing of that kind from their religion, and fancy it only to consist in sour and righteous severities. Others seem to think it arbitrary and indifferent; or that, if they live in a continual sadness and dejection of spirit, 'tis only their infelicity, not their fault; and apprehend not the obligation that is upon them by a divine law, otherwise to manage and order their spirits. But what then, are such words thought to be spoken at random: Her [q] ways are ways of pleasantness; The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance: The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, (or, in the midst of pleasantness, as the expression hath been noted to signify:) Do such precepts carry no sense with them? [r] Delight thyself in the Lord: Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice; with many more? Do all passages of this kind in Scripture stand for ciphers, or were they put in them by chance? Is there such a thing as an aptitude to delectation in our natures; and doth the sanctification thereof entitle the joy of saints to a place among the fruits of the Spirit; [s] and yet is the exercise of it to have no place in their hearts and practice? Do not think you are permitted so to extinguish or frustrate so considerable a principle of the divine life. Know, that the due exercise of it is a part of the order and discipline of God's family: that it is a constitution of the Divine goodness and wisdom both to cherish his own, and invite in strangers to him: yea, that is the scope and aim of the whole gospel revelation, that what is discovered to us of the word of life, was purposely written to draw souls into fellowship with the Father and the Son, that their joy might be full: [t] that the ministers of this gospel are therefore styled the [u] helpers of their joy. Therefore, though here it be not required nor allowed, that you should indulge a vain, trifling levity, or a sensual joy, or that you should rejoice you know not why, (imitating

q Prov. iii. 17. r Psal. xxxvii. 4. Phil. iv. 4.
s Gal. v. 22. t 1 John i. 4. u 2 Cor. iv.

the laughter of a fool,) or inopportunely, when your state admits it not, or when the Lord calls to mourning; yet settle however this persuasion in your hearts, that the serious, rational, regular, seasonable exercise of delight and joy is matter of duty, to be charged upon conscience, from the authority of God; and is an integral part in the religion of Christians. And then sure you will not think any object more proper and suitable for it to be exercised upon, than the foreseen state of blessedness, which is in itself a [x] fulness of joy; the joy of our Lord. And is, in the pre-apprehensions of it, a more considerable matter of joy than our present state affords us besides; and without relation whereto we have no rational joy at all.

2. Keep faith in exercise; both in that act of it which persuades the soul of the truth of the gospel revelation, and that act of it which unites it to God through the Mediator. The apostle prays on the behalf of his Roman Christians, that they might be [y] filled with joy and peace in believing; and we are told, how effectually (as to this) it supplied the place of sight. Such as had not seen Christ, (which was the privilege of many other Christians of that time,) yet [z] believing, did rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorious. Faith directly tends, in that double office before mentioned, to excite and foment this joy. As it assents to the truth of the gospel revelation, it realizes the object, is the substance and evidence of the invisible glory.[a] As it unites the soul with God through Christ, in a fiducial and obediential closure, it ascertains our interest therein, and is our actual acceptance of our blessedness itself; for when we take God through Christ to be our God, what is it, but to accept him as our eternal and satisfying portion, whom we are after fully to enjoy, in the vision and participation of his glorious excellencies and infinite fulness? Which two acts of faith we have mentioned together in one text,—they were persuaded of the promises, and embraced them; the former respecting the truth of the promises, the latter the goodness of the thing promised. And hereupon they confessed themselves (as it follows) pilgrims and strangers on earth; which abdication of the earth, as none of their country, could not be, but that through their faith they had a joyous pre-apprehension of that better state. That confession did manifestly involve in it a lively joy, springing from

x Psal. xvi. Matt. xxv.
z 1 Pet. i. 8.
y Rom. xv. 13.
a Heb. xi. 1.

the sight and embrace of that more taking, distant good, which the promise presented them with; whence they could not think it enough, to be such to themselves in their own thoughts and the temper of their minds; but they cannot forbear (so overcoming were their sights and tastes) to give it out, to speak, and look, and live, as those that were carried up in their spirits above this earth, and who did even disdain to own themselves in any other relation to it than that of foreigners and strangers.

Set thy faith on work, soul, and keep it a-work, and thou wilt find this no riddle; it will be so with thee too. We have much talk of faith among us, and have the name often in our mouths, but how few are the real lively believers! Is it to be thought that such blessedness should not more affect our hearts? nay, would it not ravish away our very souls, did we thoroughly believe it? And were it our present daily work, to renew the bonds of a vital union with the blessed God, in whom we expect to be blessed for ever, could that be without previous gusts of pleasure? 'Tis not talking of faith, but living by it, that will give us the experience of heavenly delights and joys.

3. Take heed of going in thy practice against thy light; of persisting in a course of known or suspected sin, that states thee in a direct hostility and rebellion against heaven, and can never suffer thee to think of eternity and the other world with comfort; will fill thy mind with frightful apprehensions of God, render the sight of his face the most terrible thing to thy thoughts thou canst imagine, and satisfaction with his likeness the most impossible thing. Let a good understanding and correspondence be continued between God and thee, (which is not possible, if thou disobeyest the dictates of thy conscience, and takest the liberty to do what thou judgest God hath forbidden thee,) that this may be thy rejoicing,[b] the testimony of a good conscience; that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not according to fleshly wisdom, but the grace of God, thou hast had thy conversation. Take God for a witness of thy ways and walkings; approve thyself to his jealous eye; study to carry thyself acceptably towards him, and unto all well pleasing. Let that be thy ambition, to stand right in his thoughts, to appear gracious in his eyes. Hold fast thine integrity, that thy heart may not reproach thee as long as thou livest. If iniquity be in thy hand, put it away; then shalt thou lift up thy face

[b] 2 Cor. i. 12.

without spot and without fear. Be a faithful subject of that kingdom of God, (and here conscience rules under him,) which consists first in righteousness, and then in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Thou wilt, so, daily behold the face of God in righteousness and with pleasure; but wilt most of all please thyself to think of thy final appearance before him, and the blessedness that shall ensue.

4. Watch and arm thyself against the too forcible strokes and impressions of sensible objects. Let not the savour of such low vile things corrupt the palate of thy soul. A sensual earthly mind and heart cannot taste heavenly delights; they that are after the flesh do savour the things of the flesh; they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. Labour to be thoroughly mortified [c] towards this world and the present state of things. Look upon this scene and pageant [d] as passing away; keep natural appetites under restraint, (the world and the lusts of it pass away together,) sensuality is an impure thing. Heavenly refined joy cannot live amidst so much filth. Yea, and if thou give thy flesh liberty too far in things that are (in specie) lawful, it will soon get advantage to domineer and keep thy soul in a depressing servitude. Abridge it then, and cut it short, that thy mind may be enlarged and at liberty, may not be thronged and prepossessed with carnal imaginations and affections. [e] "Let thy soul" (if thou wilt take this instruction from a heathen) "look with a constant erect mind into the undefiled light, neither darkened nor borne down towards the earth; but stopping its ears, and turning its eyes, and all other senses back upon itself; and quite abolishing out of itself all earthly sighs, and groans, and pleasures, and glories, and honours, and disgrace; and having forsaken all these, choose for the guides of its way, true reason and strong love, the one whereof will show it the way, the other make it easy and pleasant."

5. Having voided thy mind of what is earthly and carnal, apply and turn it to this blessed theme. The most excellent and the vilest objects are alike to thee, while thou mindest them not. Thy thoughts possibly bring thee in nothing but vexation and trouble, which would bring in as soon joy and pleasure, didst thou turn them to proper objects. A thought of the heavenly glory is as soon thought

c 1 Cor. vii. 31. d 1 John ii. 17.
e Max. Tyr. in Dissert. τι ο θεοι κατα Πλατωνος.

as of an earthly cross. We complain the world troubles us; then what do we there? Why get, we not up, in our spirits, into the quieter region? What trouble would the thoughts of future glory be to us? How are thoughts and wits set on work for this flesh! But we would have our souls flourish as the lilies, without any thing of their own care. Yea, we make them toil for torture, and not for joy, revolve an affliction a thousand times before and after it comes, and have never done with it, when eternal blessedness gains not a thought.

6. Plead earnestly with God for his Spirit. This is joy in the Holy Ghost; or whereof he is the author. Many Christians (as they must be called) are such strangers to this work of imploring and calling in the blessed Spirit, as if they were capable of adopting these words, We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost. That name is with them as an empty sound. How hardly are we convinced of our necessary dependance on that free Spirit, as to all our truly spiritual operations! The Spirit is the very earnest of our inheritance. The foretastes and first-fruits we have here of the future blessedness, the joy and pleasure, the complacential relishes we have of it beforehand, are by the gracious vouchsafement and work of this blessed Spirit. The things that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and which have not entered into the heart of man, are revealed by this Spirit. Therefore doth the apostle direct his prayer on the behalf of the Ephesians, to the Father of this glory,[f] that he would give them this Spirit of wisdom and revelation,—to enlighten the eyes of their understanding, that they might know the hope of his calling, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in (or among) the saints. And its revelation is such as begets an impression; in respect whereof, 'tis said also, to seal up to the day of redemption. Therefore, pray earnestly for this Spirit; not in idle, dreaming words of course, but as being really apprehensive of the necessity of prevailing; and give not over till thou find that sacred fire diffusing itself through thy mind and heart, to enlighten the one and refine the other, and so prepossess both of this glory, that thy soul may be all turned into joy and praise. And then let me add here, (without the formality of a distinct head,) that it concerns thee to take heed of quenching that Spirit, by either resisting or neglecting its holy dictates, or, as the same precept

[f] Eph. i.

is otherwise given, of grieving the Spirit: he is by name and office the Comforter. The primitive Christians, 'tis said, walked in the fear of God, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. Is it equal dealing, to grieve him whose business it is to comfort thee? Or canst thou expect joy where thou causest grief? Walk in the Spirit: adore its power. Let thy soul do it homage within thee. Wait for its holy influences, and yield thyself to its ducture and guidance; so wilt thou go as the redeemed of the Lord, with everlasting joy upon thy head, till thou enter that presence where is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.

Nor do thou think it improper or strange, that thou shouldst be called upon to rejoice in what thou dost not yet possess. Thy hope is instead of fruition; 'tis an anticipated enjoyment. We are commanded to [g] rejoice in hope; and saints have professed to do so, to [h] rejoice even in the hope of the glory of God. Nor is it unreasonable that should be thy present highest joy. For though yet it be a distant thing, and distinctly revealed, the excellency of the object makes compensation for both, with an abundant surplusage. As any one would much more rejoice to be assured by a great person of ample possessions he would make him his heir to, (though he knew not distinctly what they should be,) than to see a shilling already his own, with his own eyes.

CHAPTER XX.

The addition of two rules, that more specially respect the yet future season of this blessedness, after this life; *viz.*, Rule 7. That we patiently wait for it until death. Rule 8. That we love not too much this present life.

THERE are yet two more rules to be superadded, that respect the season of this blessedness,—when we awake,—*i. e.* not till we go out of time into eternity, not till we pass out of the drowsy darkness of our present state, till the night be over with us, and the vigorous light of the everlasting day do shine upon us. Hence therefore it will be further necessary,

Rule 7. That while the appointed proper season of this blessedness is not yet come, (*i. e.* till God shall vouchsafe to translate us from our present earthly state,) we compose

[g] Rom. xii. 12. [h] Rom. v. 2.

our spirits to a patient expectation of it. Upon a twofold account, the exercise of patience is very requisite in the present case, *viz.* both in respect of this very expectation itself, and also in respect of the concomitant miseries of this expecting state. In the *former* respect, an *absent* good is the matter of our *patience;* in the *latter*, *present*, and *incumbent* evil. It falls more directly in our way, to speak to the exercise of *patience* upon the former account, yet as to the latter, (though it be more collateral as to our present purpose,) it cannot be unseasonable briefly to consider that also.

First, therefore, The very expectation itself of this blessedness, renders patience very requisite to our present state. Patience hath as proper and necessary an exercise in expecting the good we want and desire, as in enduring the evil that is actually upon us. The direction, (it must be remembered,) intends such only as apprehend and desire this blessedness as their greatest good, whose souls are transported with earnest longings fully to enjoy what they have foretasted. I am apprehensive enough, that others need it not. There is no use of patience in expecting what we desire not. But as to those who desire it most, and who therefore are most concerned in this advice, it may possibly become a doubt, how since there is sin in our present ignorance of God and unlikeness to him, this can be the matter of any patience. We must therefore know, that as our knowledge of God, and conformity to him, are both our duty and blessedness, the matter both of our endeavour and of God's vouchsafement; so our ignorance of him, and unlikeness to him, are both our sin and our misery; which misery, though God hath graciously removed it in part, yet also he continues it upon us in part, (as our sad experience tells us,) by his just and wise dispensation, which we cannot except against. Now therefore, looking upon the defect of our knowledge of God and likeness to him, under the former notion, though we are to reflect upon ourselves with great displeasure and indignation; yet looking on them in the latter notion, we are to submit to the righteous dispensation of God with a meek, unrepining patience. By this patience, therefore, I mean not a stupid succumbency under the remaining disease and distemper of our spirits, in this our present state; a senseless indifferency and oscitant cessation from continual endeavours of further redress; but a silent and submissive veneration of Divine wisdom, and

justice, and goodness, that are sweetly complicated in this procedure with us, with a quiet, peaceful expectation of the blessed issue of it. This being premised, I shall briefly show,—that we have need of patience, and—that we have reason for it in this present case.

1. That we have need of it, (supposing our souls are intent upon glory, that we are in earnest in this pursuit,) will appear upon sundry accounts.

First, The greatness of the thing we expect. To behold the face of God, to be satisfied with his likeness. What serious heart, apprehensive of its own concerns, can without much patience, hold out under such an expectation? How do lovers that expect the marriage-day, tell the hours, and chide the sun that it makes no more haste! But how can that soul contain itself, that expects the most intimate fruition of the Lord of glory.

Again, consider the continual representation and frequent inculcations of this glory. Its vigorous, powerful beams are, by often repeated pulsations, continually beating upon such souls as are intent towards it. Life and immortality are brought to light in the Gospel; and they are obliged by command and inclination to attend its discoveries. The eye that 's once smitten, looks again and again, 'tis not satisfied with seeing; and every renewed look meets with still fresh rays of glory; they have frequent foretastes and prelibations, which still give life to new desires. To lie under the direct stroke of the powers of the world to come, this requires much patience, to sustain the burden of such an expectation. Life itself were otherwise a bitter and a wearisome thing. [a] And the want of such foretastes, (for alas they are not constant,) makes desire sometimes more restless, and expectation more bitter and grievous.

Moreover, Consider the nature and spring of these desires, that work in heavenly souls towards this glory. They are of a divine nature and original; he that hath wrought us to this self-same thing is God, 2 Cor. v. 5. Observe the tenor of this proposition; God is not the subject of predication, but the predicate. The action is not predicated of God, as it would in this form of words, God hath wrought us, &c. but God is predicated of this agent, *q. d.*

[a] Canerem tibi angelica voce thronorum; quam mirifica, semper in patria dulcedine repleamur; nisi vererer, ne forte, posthac, tantæ dulcedinis hujus comparatione, tota tibi in terris vita non solum amarissima, verum etiam amaritudo ipso penitus videatur. *M. Ficin. Epist.*

this is the work of a Deity; none but God could be the author of such desires. That a soul should be acted towards glory by the alone power of an almighty hand! here needs a divine patience to sustain it, and make it strong and able to endure such a motion, where there is divine power to act and move it forward. The frame could not hold else, it must dissolve. The apostle, [b] therefore, praying for the Thessalonians, that God would direct their hearts into the love of himself, (which could not but inflame their souls with a desire of a perfect vision and enjoyment,) presently adds, and into the patient waiting for of Christ. Where we cannot by the way but reflect upon the admirable constitution and equal temper of the new creature, as to the principles that are ingredient into the composition of it, fervent desires allayed with meek submission, mighty love with strong patience. If we consider it in *actu signato*, or in its *abstract idea*, this is its temperament; and of these there is a gradual participation, wherever you find it actually existing. God hath otherwise formed a creature (the prime of his creatures) so as by its most intrinsical constituent principles to be a torment to itself.

Lastly, The tiresome nature of expectation in itself, is not least considerable. It carries ('tis true) pleasure (if it be hoping expectation) with it; but not without a great admixture of pain. It brings a kind of torture to the mind, as a continued exertion or stretching forth of the neck (by which it is expressed) [c] doth to the body. Therefore it is most significantly said by the wise man, [d] Hope deferred makes the heart sick. All these, I say, together discover the truth of what the apostle tells us, [e] We have need of patience, that when we, &c. we may inherit the promise.

2. And as we have need of it, so we have also reason for it upon many accounts. It is no piece of rigorous severity to be put upon the exercise of some patience, to be kept awhile in a waiting posture for the completion of this blessedness. For,

First, The thing you expect is sure. You have not to do in this matter with one who is inconstant, or likely to change. If such a one should make us large promises, we should have some cause never to think ourselves secure, till we had them made good to us. But since we

b 2 Thess. iii. 5.
c 1 Rom. viii. 19.
d Prov. xii. 12.
e Heb. x. 36.

[f] live in the hope of eternal life, which God who cannot lie, and who we [g] know is faithful, hath promised, we may be confident, and this confidence should quiet our hearts. What a faithful friend keeps for us, we reckon as safe in his hands, as in our own. He that believes makes not haste. An impatient haste argues an unbelieving jealousy and distrust. Surely, there is an end, and thy expectation will not be cut off.

And then 'tis a happiness that will recompense the most wearisome expectation. 'Twere good sometimes to consider with ourselves, what is the object of our hope? are our expectations pitched upon a valuable good, that will be worth while to expect? So the Psalmist, [h] What wait I for? and he answers himself, My hope is in thee. Sure then that hope will not make ashamed. 'Twere a confounding thing to have been a long time full of great hopes that at last dwindle into some petite trifle, but when we know beforehand the business is such as will defray itself, bear its own charges, who would not be contented to wait?

Nor will the time of expectation be long—when I shall awake—when he shall appear. Put it to the longest term, it was said, sixteen hundred years ago, to be but a little while: three times over in the shutting up of the Bible, he tells us, I come quickly. He seems to foresee he should be something impatiently expected: and at last, Surely I come quickly, *q. d.* What will you not believe me? Be patient, saith the apostle, [i] to the coming of the Lord: and presently he adds, be patient, stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

Yea, and amidst the many troubles of that short time of expectation many present comforts are intermixed. Heaven is open to us. We have constant liberty of access to God. He disdains not our present converse. We may have the constant pleasure of the exercise of grace, the heavenly delights of meditation, the joy of the public solemnities of worship, the communion and encouragement of fellow-Christians, the light of that countenance whereof we expect the eternal vision, the comforts of the Holy Ghost, the continual prospect of glory all the way thither. What cause have we of impatience or complaint?

Further, Saints of all ages have had their expecting

[f] Tit. i. 2. [g] Heb. x. 23.
[h] Psal. xxxix. 7. [i] Jam. v.

time. We are required to be followers of them who through faith and patience have inherited the promises. Our Saviour himself waited a life's time for his glorification. I have (saith he) glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work thou gavest me to do! And now, Father, glorify me with thine own self, &c.

And while we are waiting, if it be not our fault, our glory will be increasing. We may be glorifying God in the meantime, which is the end of our beings: we need not live here to no purpose.

Again, we were well enough content, till God more clearly revealed that other state, to live always as we do. 'Tis not now ingenious to be impatiently querulous about the time of our entering into it. 'Tis his free vouchsafement; we never merited such a thing at his hands. 'Tis not commendable among men, to be over quick in exacting debts even where there was an antecedent right, much less where the right only shall accrue by promise, not yet sueable; would it not shame us to have God say to us, Have patience with me, and I will pay you all? And our former state should be often reflected on.[k] If you had promised great things to a wretch lately taken off the dunghill, and he is every day impatiently urging you to an untimely accomplishment, would you not check his over-bold haste, by minding him of his original? It becomes not base and low-born persons to be transported with a preposterous, over-hasty expectation of high and great things. And if God bear with the sinfulness of our present state, is it not reasonable we should bear with the infelicity of it to his appointed time? Besides that, we should much injure ourselves by our impatiency; imbitter our present condition, increase our own burden, dissipate our strength, retard our progress towards the perfection we profess to aim at; for patience must have its perfect work, that we may be perfect.

And others, that have had as clear apprehensions and vigorous desires (at least) of the future state of glory as we can with modesty pretend to, have yet herein moderated themselves so, as to intend their present work with composed spirits. Take that one instance of the blessed apostle, who, whilst in this earthly tabernacle he groaned, being burthened, to be clothed with glory, and to have mortality swallowed up of life, being sensible enough, that

k Jam. i.

during his abode or presence in the body, he was absent from the Lord; yet notwithstanding the fervour and vehemency of these longings, with the greatest calmness and resignation imaginable, as to the termination or continuance of his present state, he adds, that though he had rather be absent from the body, [l] to be present with the Lord, it was yet his chief ambition, (as the word he uses signifies,) whether present or absent, (as if in comparison of that, to be present or absent were indifferent, though otherwise, out of that comparison, he had told us, he would be absent rather,) to be [m] accepted, to appear grateful and well-pleasing in the eye of God; such that he might delight and take content in, as his expression imports. As if he had said, Though I am not apprehensive of the state of my case, I know well I am kept out of a far more desirable condition, while I remain in this tabernacle; yet, may I but please and appear acceptable in the sight of God, whether I be sooner dismissed from this thraldom, or longer continued in it, I contend not. His burden here, that so sensibly pressed him, was not a present evil so much as an absent good. He was not so burthened by what he felt and could not remove, as by what he saw and could not enjoy. His groans accordingly were not brutal, as those of a beast under a too heavy load; but rational, the groans of an apprehensible spirit panting after an alluring, inviting glory, which he had got the prospect of but could not yet attain. And hence the same spiritual reason which did exercise, did also, at once, moderate his desires; so that, as he saw there was reason to desire, so he saw there was reason his desires should be allayed by a submissive, ingenious patience, till they might have a due and seasonable accomplishment. And that same temper of mind we find in him, when he professes to be in a [n] strait between two, having a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which he thought to be far better, and yet apprehended his longer abode in the world to be needful for the service of the church; whereupon he expresses his confidence, that he should abide longer, and therein discovers how well contented he was it should be so. Therefore, as in reference to this very expectation itself, there is great need of patience; so the exercise of it in this case hath nothing harsh or unreasonable in it, or which the spirit of a saint may not well comport with.

l 2 Cor. v. 8. *φιλοτιμουμεθα.* m *ευαρεστοι.* n Phil. i. 23.

2. And for the exercise of patience upon the latter account; the concomitant miseries of this our present expecting state; I need not insist to show how needful it is, this being that which our own sense will sufficiently instruct us in. We are not to expect the future state of blessedness in a state of present ease and rest, in a quiet, friendly world, in a calm and peaceful region, under placid and benign influences from men and times; but amidst storms, and tempests, and troubles on every side, under frowns and displeasure, threats and dangers, harsh and rough severities, ill and ungentle usages, flouts and scorns, wrongs and injurious dealings, wants and pressures in many kinds. When the world is once forsaken by us, it grows angry; if we disclaim it, and avow ourselves not to be of it, become confessed strangers and pilgrims in it, set ourselves seriously and visibly to mind and design something above and beyond it, discover ourselves to be of them that are called out of it: from the same principle that it loves its own, it will hate us; when once God calls us his sons, the world will not know us.[o] We see in this context we are discoursing from, what the Psalmist's condition was, while as yet he remained under this blessed expectation; he found the men of time, whose portion was in this life, to be deadly enemies, wicked oppressors, proud insulters; they were to him as greedy lions, as a blood-thirsty sword. His cries to be delivered from them, show what he met with at their hands, or thought he had reason to fear. Nor can so raging enmity and hate ever cease to meditate mischiefs and cruelties. The same principle still remains in all the serpent's brood, and will still be putting forth itself in suitable practices, which cannot but infer to the contrary seed continual trouble and matter of complaint.

And, in short, whatever is here the matter of your complaint, ought to be the matter of your patience. Whence it cannot be doubted the matter of it will be very copious; so as to require the *all* of patience; (as the apostle speaks;) which his addressing this solemn request to God on the behalf of these Colossian Christians plainly intimates. He prays that [p] they may be strengthened with all might according to the glorious power of God unto *all* patience, &c. Patience is the Christian's suffering power, 'tis passive fortitude, an ability to suffer: and so apprehensive he is of

[o] 1 John iii. 1. [p] Col. i. 11.

their great need of a full and ample supply of this power, that he prays that they might be strengthened in this kind with might, with all might: that they might be even almighty sufferers; strengthened with a might according and corresponding to the glorious powers of God himself; such as might appear the proper impress and image of Divine power, whereof the Divine power might be both the principle and the pattern (for the patience whereby God bears the wrongs done to him is called the power too; Let the power of the Lord be great as thou hast spoken, saying, The Lord is long suffering, forgiving, &c.) And this *unto all patience*, where patience is put for an act of this power, or must be understood of patience in exercise, actual bearing. Nor are we to look upon the expressions of this prayer as so many hyperbolical strains, or rhetorical schemes of speech. He prays according to the apprehension he had of the necessity of suffering Christians.

And yet how much soever the need is, the reason is not less, 'tis a thing as possible as it is necessary; yea, there is more in the power of the cause, than to work this single effect. I mean it not only of the efficient cause mentioned before, but of the objective or final (as having such a superabundant sufficiency in its kind also) hinted in the close of the following verse. He doth not utter vain and groundless wishes, when he prays, that to that all of patience they might add joyfulness too, and giving of thanks; no, the matter (as if he had said) will bear it, even the inheritance of the saints in light, the very expectation objective, I am speaking of. It hath enough in it to induce, not only patience, but joy, not a contented bearing only, but giving of thanks too, [q] to him that hath made you meet for that inheritance. True it is indeed, that the very need we have of patience, and the gain that would accrue by it, is itself a reason, why we should labour to frame our spirits to it: for if such evils must be undergone, how much better is it to bear them alone, than to have the disease of a wounded, impatient spirit to bear also as an additional burden. The *law* of patience is certainly a most indulgent, merciful law, a gracious provision (as much as can be made by a law) for the quiet and ease of our spirits, under the sharpest and most afflictive sufferings. As might at large be shown, were it suitable to fall into a discourse of patience in itself considered; and to treat of that rest and pleasure, that liberty of spirit, that possession

q Col. i. 12.

and dominion of one's own soul, which it carries in it: but that were too much a digression. It only falls directly here in our way to consider, that as we have many grievances and pressures to undergo, while we are expecting the future blessedness, which render the exercise of patience very requisite, so that there is enough of weight and worth in that very expectation (*i. e.* in what we expect) to outweigh them all, and to render the exercise thereof highly reasonable upon that account. [r] I reckon (saith the apostle) that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. Thus (saith he) I reckon, *i. e.* it is my stated, settled judgment, not a sudden, rash thought. When I have reasoned the matter with myself, weighed it well, considered the case, turned it round, viewed it exactly on every side, balanced advantages and disadvantages, pondered all things which are fit to come into consideration about it, this is the result, the final determination, that which I conclude and judge at last, (judgment is the last product and issue of the most exquisite inquiry and debate, the ultimate and most perfect act of reason,) that the sufferings of this now of time are of no value; things not fit, as it were, to be mentioned the same day with the glory to be revealed, &c. It can therefore be no *hard law*, no unreasonable imposition, that shall oblige us to the exercise of *patience*, under such sufferings, in the expectation of so transcendent glory. For, consider,—First, These sufferings are but from men; (for the sufferings of which the apostle here speaks, are such as wherein we suffer together with Christ, *i. e.* for his name and interest, on behalf of the Christian cause;) but this glory is from God. How disproportionable must the effects be of a created and increated cause.—Again, these sufferings reach no further than the bone and flesh, (fear not them that kill the body, and after they have done that, can do no more, &c.) but this glory reaches unto and transforms the soul. How little can a clod of earth suffer, in comparison of what an immortal spirit may enjoy!—And further, There is much mixture in our present sufferings; the present state of suffering saints is not a state of total misery; there are, as it were, rays of glory interlaced with their present afflictions: but there will be nothing of affliction mingled with their future glory.

Yea, and (what may not only convince, but even trans-

[r] Rom. viii. 18.

port us too) these sufferings are but temporary, nay but momentary, this glory eternal. What heart is big enough to comprehend the full sense of these words, [a] Our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. How might I dwell here upon every syllable, light affliction, weighty glory, *exceeding weight*, affliction for a moment, eternal weight of glory! O then, how unworthy is it of the Christian name and hopes, that we should have an impatient resentment of this method God follows with us, (as he did with our great Redeemer and Lord,) that we should suffer first, and then enter into glory! Heaven were a poor heaven, if it would not make us savers. It were high time for us to give over the Christian profession, if we do not really account, that its reward and hope do surmount its reproach and trouble; or do think its cross more weighty than its crown. Is the price and worth of eternal glory fallen? It hath been counted worth suffering for. There have been those in the world that would not accept deliverance from these sufferings, that they might obtain the better resurrection. Are we grown wiser? Or would we indeed wish God should turn the tables, and assign us our good things here, and hereafter evil things? Ungrateful souls! How severe should we be to ourselves, that we should be so apt to complain for what we should admire and give thanks! What, because purer and more refined Christianity in our time and in this part of the world, hath had public favour and countenance, can we therefore not tell how to frame our minds to the thoughts of sufferings? Are tribulation and patience antiquated names, quite out of date and use with us, and more ungrateful to our ears and hearts, than heaven and eternal glory are acceptable? And had we rather (if we were in danger of suffering on the Christian account) run a hazard as to the latter, than adventure on the former? Or do we think it impossible we should ever come to the trial, or be concerned to busy ourselves with such thoughts? Is the world become so stable and so unacquainted with vicissitudes, that a state of things less favourable to our profession can never revolve upon us? It were, however, not unuseful to put such a case by way of supposition to ourselves. For every sincere Christian is in affection and preparation of his mind a martyr. He that loves not Christ better than his own life, cannot be his disciple. We

[a] 2 Cor. iv. 17.

should at least inure our thoughts more to a suffering state, that we may thence take some occasion to reflect and judge of the temper of our hearts towards the name and cause of Christ. 'Tis easy suffering indeed, in idea and contemplation; but something may be collected from the observation, how we can relish and comport with such thoughts. 'Tis as training in order to fight; which is done often upon a very remote supposition, that such occasions may possibly fall out.

Therefore, What now do we think of it if our way into the kingdom of God shall be through many tribulations? If, before we behold the smiles of his blessed face, we must be entertained with the less pleasing sight of the frowning aspect and visage of an angry world? If we first bear the image of a crucified Christ, ere we partake of the likeness of a glorious God? What, do we regret the thoughts of it? Do we account we shall be ill dealt with, and have a hard bargain of it? O how tender are we grown, in comparison of the hardiness and magnanimity of primitive Christians! We have not the patience to think of what they had the patience to endure. We should not yet forget ourselves, that such a thing belongs to our profession, even in this way to testify our fidelity to Christ, and our value of the inheritance purchased by his blood, if he call us thereunto. We must know it is a thing inserted into the religion of Christians, and (with respect to their condition in this world) made an essential thereto. He cannot be a Christian, that doth not deny himself and take up the cross. How often when the active part of a Christian's duty is spoken of, is the passive part studiously and expressly annexed! Let us run [t] *with patience* the race that is set before us. The good ground brought forth fruit, [u] *with patience*, eternal life is for them that by [x] *a patient* continuance in well-doing seek after it. Yea, and hence the word of Christ is called [y] the word of his *patience*. And the style wherein the beloved disciple speaks of himself and his profession, is this, [z] I John, a companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and *patience* of Jesus Christ. Do we mean to plead prescription against all this? or have we got an express exemption? Have we a discharge to show, a manumission from all the suffering part of a Christian's duty? and is it not a discharge also from being Christians as much? Will we disavow ourselves to belong to that noble society, of them that through

t Heb. xii. 1. u Matt. xvii. x Rom. ii. y Rev. iii. z Rev. i.

faith and patience inherit the promises? Surely we are highly conceited of ourselves, if we think we are too good to be numbered among them of whom the world was not worthy. Or we design to ourselves a long abode here, while we so much value the world's favour, and a freedom from worldly trouble: or eternity is with us an empty sound, and the future blessedness of saints an airy thing, that we should reckon it insufficient to counterpoise the sufferings of a few hasty days that will soon have an end. 'Tis a sad symptom of the declining state of religion, when the powers of the world to come are so over-mastered by the powers of this present world, and objects of sense so much outweigh those of faith. And is not this apparently the case with the Christians of the present age? Do not your thoughts run the same course with theirs that meditated nothing but sitting on the right and left hand of Christ, in an earthly dominion, while they never dreamt of drinking of his cup, or being baptized with his baptism? How many vain dreamers have we of golden mountains, and (I know not what) earthly felicity; whose pretended prophecies about a (supposed) near approaching prosperity to the church on earth, gain easier belief, or are more savoury and taking, with too many, than all that the sacred oracles discover about its glorious state in heaven! Hence are our shoulders so unfitted to Christ's yoke, (like the unaccustomed heifer,) and the business of suffering will not enter into our hearts. Methinks the belief and expectation of such a state hereafter, should make us even regardless of what we see or suffer here; and render the good or evil things of time as indifferent to us. Yet neither plead I for an absolute stoical apathy, but for patience. A great follower of that sect acknowledges, [a] "It is not a virtue to bear what we feel not, or have no sense of. Stupidity under Providence is not a Christian temper;" as that moralist says of the wise man, "'Tis not the hardness of stone or iron that is to be ascribed to him." But lest any should run into that more dangerous mistake, to think, that by the patience we have been all this while persuading to (in the expectation of the blessedness yet to come) is meant a love of this present world, and a complacential adherence of heart to the earth; (which extreme the terrene temper of many souls may much incline them to;) it will be necessary upon that account to add (in reference also to the yet

[a] Sen. de Constant. sapientis.

future expected season of this blessedness) this further and concluding instruction, *viz.*

8. *Rule.* That (however we are not to repine at our being held so long in this world in an expecting state, yet) we let not our souls cleave too close to their terrestrial stations, nor be too much in love with the body, and this present low state of life on earth. For evident it is, that notwithstanding all the miseries of this expecting state, the most are yet loth to leave the world, and have hearts sordidly hankering after present things. And surely there is much difference between being *patient* of an abode on earth, and being *fond* of it. Therefore since the true blessedness of saints consists in such things as we have shown, and cannot be enjoyed till we awake, not within the compass of time and this lower world; it will be very requisite to insist here awhile in the prosecution of this last rule. And what I shall say to it shall be by way of—caution—and enforcement.

1. For caution: that we misapprehend not that temper and disposition of spirit, we are in this thing to endeavour and aim at. And it especially concerns us to be cautious about the—inducements, and—degree, of that desire of leaving this world, or contempt of this present life, which we either aspire to, or allow ourselves in.

First, Inducements. Some are desirous, others at least content, to quit the world upon very insufficient, or indeed wicked considerations.

1. There are, who desire it merely to be out of the way of present troubles, whereof they have either too impatient a sense, or an unworthy and impotent fear. Many times the urgency and anguish of incumbent trouble impresses such a sense, and utters itself in such language, as that, [b] Now, O Lord, take I beseech thee my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live. Or that, [c] My soul chooseth strangling and death rather than life: makes men long for death, and dig for it as for hid treasure; rejoice and be exceeding glad when they can find the grave.

Yea, and the very fear of troubles that are but impendent and threatening, makes some wish the grave a sanctuary, and renders the clods of the valley sweet unto their thoughts. They lay possibly so humoursome and fanciful stress upon the mere circumstances of dying, that they are earnest to die out of hand to avoid dying so and so; as

b Jonah iv. 3. c Job vii. 15.

the poet would fain persuade himself[d] it was not *death he feared, but shipwreck: it would not trouble them to die, but to die by a violent hand,* or to be made a public spectacle; they cannot endure the thoughts of dying so. Here is nothing commendable or worthy of a Christian in all this. It were a piece of Christian bravery to dare to live in such a case, even when there is a visible likelihood of dying a sacrifice in the midst of flames. How much this glory was affected in the earlier days of Christianity is sufficiently known: though I confess there were excesses in that kind, altogether unimitable. But if God call a man forth to be his champion and witness, to lay down a life, in itself little desirable, in a truly worthy cause, the call of his providence should be as the sound of the trumpet to a truly martial spirit; it should fill his soul with a joyful courage and sense of honour, and be complied with cheerfully, with that apprehension and resentment a stout soldier would have of his general's putting him upon some very hazardous piece of service, *viz.* he would say, [e] (as the moralist expresses his sense for him,) *My general hath not deserved ill of me, but it appears he judged well.* It should be counted all joy [f] to fall into such trials; that is, when they become our lot by a providential disposition, not by a rash precipitation of ourselves. And as it is a wickedness inconsistent with Christianity, to be of that habitual temper, to choose to desert such a cause for the saving of life; so it is a weakness very reproachful to it, to lay down one's life in such a case with regret, as unwilling in this kind to glorify him who laid down his for us. We are no more to die to ourselves than to live to ourselves. Our Lord Jesus hath purchased to himself a dominion over both states, of the living and dead, and whether [g] we live, we must live to him, or die, we must die to him. 'Tis the glory of a Christian to live so much above the world, that nothing in it may make him either fond of life, or weary of it.

2. There are others who are (at least) indifferent and careless how soon they die, out of either a worse than paganish infidelity, disbelieving the concernments of another world; or a brutish stupidity, not apprehending them; or a gross conceited ignorance, misunderstanding the terms of the gospel, and thinking themselves to be in a good condition, as to eternity, when the case is much

d Demite naufragium, mors mihi munus erit. Ovid.
e Imperator de me non male meruit, sed bene judicavit. Sen.
f Jam. i. 2. g Rom. xiv, 8.

otherwise with them. Take heed thy willingness to die be from no such inducements, but a mere desire of being with God, and of attaining this perfection and blessedness, which he hath engaged thee in the pursuit and expectation of. And then, having made sure it be right as to the rise and principle.

Be careful it be not undue in point of degree; *i. e.* a cold intermittent velleity is too little on the one hand, and a peremptory, precipitant hastiness is too much on the other. The middle and desirable temper here is a complacential submission to the Divine will in that affair, with a preponderating inclination on our part, towards our eternal home, if the Lord see good. For we have two things to attend in this business, and by which our spirits may be swayed this way or that, *i. e.* the goodness of the object to be chosen, and the will of God which must guide and overrule our choice; the former whereof we are permitted to eye in subordination to the latter, and not otherwise. Now our apprehension of the desirableness and intrinsic goodness of the object ought to be such, (we are infidels else, if we have not that account of it,) that nothing we can eye under the notion of a good to us, may be reckoned so eligible as that, *viz.* our final and complete blessedness in the other world; which because we know we cannot enjoy without dying, death also must be judged more eligible than life, that is, our blessedness must be judged eligible for itself, and death as requisite to make it present. So that the entire object we are discoursing of being present blessedness, consider it in comparison with any thing else, that can be looked upon by us as a good which we ourselves are to enjoy, it ought to be preferred and chosen out of hand, inasmuch as nothing can be so great a present good to us as that. And this ought to be the proper habitual inclination of our spirits, their constant frame and bent, as they respect only our interest and welfare. But considering God's dominion over us, and interest in our lives and beings, and that as well ingenuity as necessity binds us to be subject to his pleasure, we should herein patiently suffer ourselves to be overruled thereby, and not so abstractly mind our own interest and contentment in this matter, as if we were altogether our own, and had no Lord over us. Plato, who abounds in discourses of the desirableness of dying, and of the blessed change it makes with them that are good, yet hath this apt expression of the subjection we ought to be in to the

Divine pleasure as to this matter, [h] "That the soul is in the body as soldiers in a garrison, from whence they may not withdraw themselves without his order and direction who placed them there:" and expostulates thus, "If (saith he) a slave of yours should destroy his own life without your consent, would you not be displeased; and if there had been any place left for revenge, been apt enough for that too?" So he brings in Socrates discoursing; and discovers himself herein to have had more light in this matter, touching that subordinate interest only men have in their own lives, and the unlawfulness of self-murder, (as he had in other things too,) than most heathens of the more refined sect ever arrived to.

If therefore God would give us leave to die, we should upon our own account be much more inclined to choose it; but while he thinks fit to have it deferred, should yield to his will with an unrepining submission. Only it ought not to rest at all on our part, or that as to ourselves we find any thing more grateful to us in this world, that we are willing to stay a day longer in it. That for our own sakes we should affect a continuance here, would argue a terrene, sordid spirit. But then such should be our dutiful filial love to the Father of our spirits, that in pure devotedness to his interests, we would be content to dwell (if he would have it so) a Methuselah's age in an earthly tabernacle for his service; that is, that we may help to preserve his memorial in a lapsed world, (overrun with atheism and ignorance of its Maker,) and win him hearts and love (to our uttermost) among his apostate, disloyal creatures; and in our capacities be helpful to the encouragement of such as he continues in the world for the same purposes. This is the very temper the apostle expresses[i] when in that strait. Which way the poise of his own spirits inclined him, in the consideration of his own interest, and what was simply more eligible to him, he expresses with high emphasis; To be with Christ, saith he, is more, more desirable to be, (for there are two comparatives in the Greek text,) and therefore he professes his own desire in order thereto, to be dissolved; but that private desire was not so peremptory and absolute, but he could make it yield and give place to his duty towards God and his church, as it follows. So we know 'tis possible, that respects to a friend may oversway a man's own particular in-

[h] In Phæd. Vid. et Plotin. περι εξαγωγης, Enead. 1.
[i] Phil. i.

clination; and the inclination remain notwithstanding, but is subdued only; otherwise, had any reason or argument that did respect myself persuaded me to change it, I should then follow but my own proper inclination still, and so my friend hath nothing to thank me for.

So it ought to be with us here. Our inclination should preponderate towards a present change of our state; only our devotedness to his interest and pleasure, whose we are, should easily overrule it. This is the lovely temper of a gracious spirit, as to this thing, that to die might be our choice, and to live in the meantime submitted to as our duty. As an ingenuous son whom his father hath employed abroad in a foreign country, though duty did bind him cheerfully therein to comply with his father's will, and the necessity of his affairs; yet, when his father shall signify to him, that now he understands no necessity of his longer continuance there, and therefore he may if he please return, but he shall have leave to follow his own inclination, 'tis not hard to conjecture, that the desire of seeing a father's face would soon determine the choice of such a son that way. But how remote are the generality of them that profess themselves God's children from that pious ingenuity! We have taken root in the earth, and forgotten our heavenly originals and alliances. We are as inhabitants here, not pilgrims; hardly persuaded to entertain with any patience the thoughts of leaving our places on earth; which yet, do we what we can, shall shortly know us no more. In short, then, that vile temper of spirit, against which I professedly bend myself in the following discourse, is, when men, not out of any sense of duty toward God, or solicitude for their own souls, but a mere sordid love to the body, and affixedness of heart to the earth and terrene things, cannot endure the thoughts of dying. And that which I persuade to is, that having the true prospect of the future blessedness, before our eyes, and our hearts possessed with the comfortable hope of attaining to it, we shake off our earthly inclinations, and expect with desire and joy the time of our dismission hence, that we may enjoy it; which is the design of what was promised in the next place, *viz.*

2. The inforcement of this instruction. Suffer we therefore ourselves to be reasoned with about this matter; and let us consider whether we can in good earnest think such an aversation, as we discover, to our blessed translation hence, an excusable, a tolerable temper; or whether it be

not highly reasonable, that we should entertain the thoughts, at least, with more content and patience (if not with more fervent desire) of our departure hence and introduction into that other state. Let me demand of thee, dost thou thus regret the thoughts of death, as being unwilling to die at all, or as being unwilling to die as yet? Is it the thing itself, or only the circumstance of time that thou exceptest against? 'Tis likely thou wilt say that which will seem more plausible, and so fix only on the latter; and that thou wilt not profess to desire an eternity on earth, but only more time. Well, let that for the present be supposed, as it is a more modest, so to be a true account of thy desires: yet what is the reason of this moderation with thee herein; and that thou so limitest thyself? Is it that thou believest the blessedness of the other state will prove better than any thing thou canst enjoy here; and that thou art not willing eternally to be deprived of? But dost thou not think it is *now* better also? And what canst thou pretend, why what is *now* the best and most desirable good, should not be *now* chosen and desired out of hand? Or is it that thou thinkest it unbecomes thee to cross the supreme will of him that made thee, who hath determined, that all men once shall die? And then, how knowest thou but he hath also determined concerning thee that thou shalt die the next day or hour? and it is only a present willingness to die, in subordination to the Divine will, or upon supposition of it, thou art persuaded to. Why, art thou not afraid, lest thy present unwillingness should cross his present will? Dost thou not think that sovereign power is as sufficient to determine of the circumstance, as the thing itself? And art thou not ashamed to pretend an agreement with God about the thing itself, and yet differ with him about a circumstance? Shall that be a ground of quarrel between him and thee?

But while thou only professest that more modest desire of more time in the world, what security canst thou give, that when that desire hath been liberally gratified, it shall be at length laid down, and tumultuate no more? What bounds wilt thou fix to it, which thou darest undertake it shall not pass? Art thou sure, when thou shalt have lain at the world's breast ten or twenty years longer, thou wilt then imagine thyself to have drawn it dry; or that then thou shalt begin to nauseate the world and wish for heaven? Or hast thou not reason from thy former experience to suspect, that the longer thou dwellest on earth, the more

terrene thou wilt grow; and that if thou be indisposed to leave it this day or year, thou wilt be more so the next; and so thy desire become boundless and infinite, which is to desire to be here always, the thing which thou seemedst so unwilling to own? And if that prove at last the true state of thy case, art thou then a Christian, or art thou a man, that thou harbourest in thy breast so irreligious and irrational, yea, so sordid a wish? What! wish eternally to be affixed to a clod of earth? Is that at length become thy God? Or wilt thou say, he is thy God whom thou never desirest to enjoy? Or, that thou hast already enough of him, but not of the world, and yet that he is thy God? Or wouldst thou overturn the laws of nature, and subvert the most sacred divine constitutions, abortive the designs of eternal wisdom and love, evacuate and nullify the great achievements of thy merciful and mighty Redeemer, only to gratify a sensual, brutish humour? But evident it is, thou dost only in vain disquiet thyself, thou canst not disturb the settled order of things. Eternal laws are not repealable by a fond wish. Thou settest that dreadful thing, *death*, at nothing the further distance, by thine abhorrency of it. It will overtake thee whether thou wilt or no; and methinks thine own reason should instruct thee to attemper and form thyself to what thou canst not avoid, and possess thee with such thoughts and desires as those of that discreet pagan.[k] "Lead me, O God, (saith he,) whither thou wilt, and I will follow thee willingly; but if I be rebellious and refuse, I shall follow thee notwithstanding." What we cannot decline, 'tis better to bear willingly, than with a regret, that shall be both vain and afflictive.

And what hast thou hitherto met with in the world, that should so highly endear it to thee? Examine and search more narrowly into thy earthly comforts; what is there in them to make them self-desirable, or to be so for their own sakes? What is it to have thy flesh indulged and pleased? to have thy sense gratified? thy fancy tickled? What so great good, worthy of an immortal, reasonable spirit, canst thou find in meats and drinks, in full barns and coffers, in vulgar fame and applause, that should render these things desirable for themselves? And if there were any real felicity in these things for the present, whilst thou art permitted to enjoy them, yet dost thou not know, that what thou enjoyest to-day thou mayst lose to-morrow, and that

k Epictet.

such other unthought-of evils may befall thee, as may infuse a bitterness into all thou enjoyest, which causes immediately the enjoyment to cease, while the things themselves remain, and will be equal to a total loss of all? And thus, as the moralist[1] ingeniously speaks, "thou wilt continually need another happiness to defend the former, and new wishes must still be made on the behalf of those which have already succeeded." But canst thou indeed think it worth the while that the Maker of the universe should create a soul, and send it down into the world on purpose to superintend these trivial affairs, to keep alive a silly piece of well-figured earth while it eats and drinks, to move it to and fro in chase of shadows, to hold it up while others bow the knee and do it homage, if it had not some higher work to mind in reference to another state? Art thou contented to live long in the world to such purposes? What low worthless spirit is this, that had rather be so employed than in the visions of his Maker's face; that chooses thus to entertain itself on earth, rather than partake the effusions of Divine glory above; that had rather creep with worms than soar with angels; associate with brutes than with the spirits of just men made perfect? Who can solve the phenomenon, or give a rational account why there should be such a creature as man upon the earth, abstracting from the hopes of another world? Who can think it the effect of an infinite wisdom; or account it a more worthy design, than the representing of such a scene of actions and affairs by puppets on a stage? For my part, upon the strictest inquiry, I see nothing in the life of man upon earth, that should render it, for itself, more the matter of a rational election (supposing the free option given him in the first moment of his being) than presently again to cease to be the next moment.

Yea, and is there not enough obvious in every man's experience, to incline him rather to the contrary choice; and supposing a future blessedness in another world, to make him passionately desirous (with submission to the Divine pleasure) of a speedy dismission into it? Do not the burdens that press us in this earthly tabernacle teach our very sense, and urge oppressed natures into involuntary groans, while as yet our consideration doth not intervene? And if we do consider, is not every thought a sting, making a much deeper impression than what only toucheth our flesh

[1] Sen. de Brev. Vit.

and bones? Who can reflect upon his present state and not presently be in pangs? The troubles that follow humanity are many and great, those that follow Christianity more numerous and grievous. The sickness, pains, losses, disappointments, and whatsoever afflictions that are, in the apostle's language,[m] human, or common to men, (as are all the external sufferings of Christians, in nature and kind, though they are liable to them upon an account peculiar to themselves, which there the apostle intimates,) are none of our greatest evils; yet even upon the account of them, have we any reason to be so much in love with so unkind a world? Is it not strange, our very bridewell should be such a heaven to us? But these things are little considerable in comparison of the more spiritual grievances of Christians, as such; that is, those that afflict our souls while we are (under the conduct of Christ) designing for a blessed eternity; if we indeed make that our business, and do seriously intend our spirits in order thereto. The darkness of our beclouded minds; the glimmering ineffectual apprehension we have of the most important things; the inconsistency of our shattered thoughts, when we would apply them to spiritual objects; the great difficulty of working off an ill frame of heart, and the no less difficulty of retaining a good; our being so frequently tossed as between heaven and hell; when we sometimes think ourselves to have even attained and hope to descend no more, and all on a sudden plunged in the ditch, so as that our own clothes might abhor us; fall so low into an earthly temper, that we can like nothing heavenly or divine, and because we cannot, are enforced justly most of all to dislike ourselves? are these things little with us? How can we forbear to cry out of the depths, to the Father of our spirits, that he would pity and relieve his own offspring! Yea, are we not weary of our crying; and yet more weary of holding in? How do repelled temptations return again, and vanquished corruptions recover strength! We know not when our work is done. We are miserable that we need to be always watching, and more miserable that we cannot watch, but are so often surprised and overcome of evil. We say sometimes with ourselves, we will seek relief in retirement, but we cannot retire from ourselves; or in converse with godly friends, but they sometimes prove snares to us and we to them, or we hear but our own mise-

m 1 Cor. x. 13.

ries repeated in their complaints. Would we pray? How faint is the breath we utter! How long is it ere we can get our souls possessed with any becoming apprehensions of God, or lively sense of our own concernments? Would we meditate? We sometimes go about to compose our thoughts, but we may as well assay to hold the winds in our fist. If we venture forth into the world, how do our senses betray us? how are we mocked with their impostures? Their nearer objects become with us the only realities, and eternal things are all vanished into airy shadows. Reason and faith are laid asleep, and our sense dictates to us what we are to believe and do, as if it were our only guide and lord. And what, are we not yet weary? Is it reasonable to continue in this state of our own choice? Is misery become so natural to us, so much our element, that we cannot affect to live out of it? Is the darkness and dirt of a dungeon more grateful to us than a free open air and sun? Is this flesh of ours so lovely a thing, that we had rather suffer so many deaths in it, than one in putting it off and mortality with it? While we carry it about us, our souls impart a kind of life to it, and it gives them death in exchange. Why do we not cry out more feelingly," O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Is it not grievous to us to have so cumbersome a yoke-fellow, to be tied (as Mezentius is said to have done) the living and the dead together. Do we not find the distempers of our spirits are mostly from these bodies we are so in love with, either as the proper springs or as the occasion of them? From what cause is our drowsy sloth, our eager passions, our aversion to spiritual objects, but from this impure flesh; or what else is the subject about which our vexatious cares, or torturing fears, our bitter griefs, are taken up day by day?

And why do we not consider, that 'tis only our love to it that gives strength and vigour to the most of our temptations, as wherein it is most immediately concerned, and which makes them so often victorious, and thence to become our after-afflictions? He that hath learned to mortify the inordinate love of the body, will he make it the business of his life to purvey for it? Will he offer violence to his own soul, to secure it from violence? Will he comply with men's lusts and humours for its advantage and accommodation; or yield himself to the tyranny of his own avarice for its future, or of his more sensual lusts for its present, content? Will it not rather be pleasing to him, that his

outward man be exposed to perish, while his inward man is renewed day by day? He to whom the thoughts are grateful of laying it down, will not (though he neglect not duty towards it) spend his days in its continual service, and make his soul a hell by a continual provision for the flesh and the lusts of it. That is cruel love that shall enslave a man, and subject him to so vile and ignoble a servitude. And it discovers a sordid temper to be so imposed upon. How low are our spirits sunk, that we disdain not so base a vassalage! God and nature hath obliged us to live in bodies for a time, but they have not obliged us to measure ourselves by them, to confine our desires and designs to their compass, to look no further than their concernments, to entertain no previous joys in the hope of being one day delivered from them. No such hard law is laid upon us. But how apt are we to become herein a most oppressive law to ourselves; and not only to lodge in filthy earthen cottages, but to love them and confine ourselves to them, loth so much as to peep out. 'Tis the apt expression of a [n] philosopher, upbraiding that base, low temper, *The degenerous soul*, (saith he,) *buried in the body, is as a slothful creeping thing, that loves its hole and is loth to come forth.*

And methinks, if we have no love for our better and more noble self, we should not be altogether unapprehensive of an obligation upon us, to express a dutiful love to the Author of our beings. Doth it consist with the love we owe to him, to desire always to lurk in the dark, and never come into his blessed presence? Is that our love, that we never care to come nigh him? Do we not know, [o] that while we are present in the body, we are absent from the Lord? Should we not therefore be willing rather to be present with the Lord, and absent from the body? Should we not put on a confidence, a holy fortitude, (as 'tis there expressed, we are confident, or of good courage, and thence, willing, &c.) that might carry us through the grave to him. As is the brave speech of that last-mentioned philosopher, *God will call thee ere long, expect his call.* [p] *Old age will come upon thee, and show thee the way thither; and death, which he that is possessed with a base fear, laments and dreads as it draws on, but he that is a*

n Η δε δειλη ψυχη κατορωρυγμενη εν σωματι, ως ερπετον νωθες εις φωλεον, φιλει τον φωλεον, &c. Max. Tyr. Diss. 41.

o 2 Cor. v. 6, 8.

p Δειλος σὐρεται, &c. Item. Diss. 1.

lover of God expects it with joy, and with courage meets it when it comes. Is our love to God so faint and weak, that it dares not encounter death, nor venture upon the imaginary terrors of the grave, to go to him? How unsuitable is this to the character which is given [q] of a saint's love! And how expressly are we told, that he who loves his life better than Christ, or that even hates it not for his sake, (as certainly he cannot be said to do, that is not willing to part with it to enjoy him,) cannot be his disciple! If our love to God be not *supreme* 'tis *none*, or not such as can denominate us lovers of him; and will we pretend to be so, when we love a putrid flesh and this base earth better than him? And have we not professedly, as a fruit of our avowed love to him, surrendered ourselves? Are we not his devoted ones? Will we be his, and yet our own? or pretend ourselves dedicated to his holy pleasure, and will yet be at our own dispose, and so dispose of ourselves too, as that we may be most ungrateful to him, and most incapable of converse with him? How doth this love of a perishing life and of a little animated clay stop all the effusions of the love of God, suspend its sweet and pleasant fruits, which should be always exerting themselves towards him! Where is their love, obedience, joy, and praise, who are through the fear of death all their lives subject to bondage, and kept under a continual dismal expectation of an unavoidable dissolution? But must the great God lose his due acknowledgments because we will not understand wherein he deals well with us? Is his mercy therefore no mercy? As we cannot nullify his truth by our unbelief, so nor his goodness by our disesteem. But yet consider, doth it not better become thee to be grateful than repine that God will one day unbind thy soul and set thee free, knock off thy fetters and deliver thee out of the house of thy bondage; couldst thou upon deliberate thoughts judge it tolerable, should he doom thee to this earth for ever? *He hath however judged otherwise*, (as the pagan emperor and philosopher excellently speaks,[r]) *who is the author both of the first composition of thy present being and now of the dissolution of it; thou wert the cause of neither, therefore depart and be thankful, for he that dismisseth thee dealeth kindly with thee.* If yet thou understandest it not, yet remember, it is thy Father that disposes thus of thee. How unworthy is it to dis-

q Cant. viii.
r M. Aurel. Ant. de Vit. Sua, l. 12. αντιθετως οι απολυων ιλεως.

trust his love; what child would be afraid to compose itself to sleep in the parent's bosom? It expresses nothing of the duty and ingenuity, but much of the frowardness and folly, of a child: they sometimes cry vehemently in the undressing; but should their cries be regarded by the most indulgent parent? or are they fit to be imitated by us?

We have no excuse for this our frowardness. The blessed God hath told us his gracious purposes concerning us, and we are capable of understanding him. What if he had totally hidden from us our future state? and that we knew nothing, but of going into an eternal, silent darkness? the authority of a Creator ought to have awed us into a silent submission. But when we are told of such a glory, that 'tis but drawing aside the fleshly veil and we presently behold it, methinks the blessed hour should be expected not with patience only, but with ravishing joy. Did we hear of a country in this world, where we might live in continual felicity, without toil, or sickness, or grief, or fear, who would not wish to be there, though the passage were troublesome? Have we not heard enough of heaven to allure us thither? Or is the eternal truth of suspected credit with us? Are God's own reports of the future glory unworthy our belief or regard? How many, upon the credit of his word, are gone already triumphantly into glory! [a] that only by seeing the promises afar off, were persuaded of them, and embraced them; and never after owned themselves under any other notion than of pilgrims on earth, longing to be at home in their most desirable, heavenly country. We are not the first that are to open heaven; the main body of saints is already there; 'tis, in comparison of their number, but a scattering remnant that are now alive upon the earth. How should we long to be associated to that glorious assembly! Methinks we should much more regret our being left behind.

But if we should desire still to be so, why may not all others as well as we, and as much expect to be gratified as we? And then we should agree in desiring, that our Redeemer's triumph might be deferred, that his body might yet remain incomplete, that he might still be debarred of the long expected fruit of the travail of his soul, that the name of God might be still subjected to the blasphemy and reproach of an atheistical world, who have all along said with derision, Where is the promise of his coming?

[a] Heb. xi. 13, 16.

Would we have all his designs to be still unfinished, and so mighty wheels stand still for us, while we sport ourselves in the dust of the earth, and indulge our sensual inclination, which sure this bold desire must argue to be very predominant in us; and take heed it argue not its habitual prevalency. At least, if it discover not our present sensuality, it discovers our former sloth and idleness. It may be, we may excuse our averseness to die by our unpreparedness, *i. e.* one fault with another; though that be besides the case I am speaking of. What then have we been doing all this while? What! were the affairs of thy soul not thought of till now? Take then thy reproof from a heathen, that it may convince thee the more: "No one (saith he) [t] divides away his money from himself, but yet men divide away their very life.—But doth it not shame thee (he after adds) to reserve only the relics of thy life to thyself, and to devote that time only to a good mind which thou canst employ upon no other thing; How late is it to begin to live when we should make an end; and defer all good thoughts to such an age as possibly few do ever reach to. The truth is (as he speaks) we have not little time, but we lose much, we have time enough were it well employed, therefore we cannot say we receive a short life, but we make it so, we are not indigent of time, but prodigal: what a pretty contradiction is it to complain of the shortness of time, and yet do what we can to precipitate its course; to hasten it by that we call pastime! If it have been so with thee, art thou to be trusted with more time?" But as thy case is, I cannot wonder that the thoughts of death be most unwelcome to thee; who art thou that thou shouldst desire the day of the Lord? I can only say to thee, hasten thy preparation, have recourse to rule second, and third, and accordingly guide thyself till thou find thy spirit made more suitable to this blessedness; that it become savoury and grateful to thy soul, and thy heart be set upon it. Hence thou mayst be reconciled to the grave, and the thoughts of death may cease to be a terror to thee.

And when thou art attained so far, consider thy great advantage in being willing and desirous to die upon this further account, That thy desire shall now be pitched upon a thing so certain. Thine other desires have met with many a disappointment. Thou hast set thy heart upon

[t] Sen.

other things, and they have deceived thy most earnest, thirsty expectations. Death will not do so. Thou wilt now have one certain hope; one thing in reference whereto thou mayst say, "I am sure." Wait awhile, this peaceful sleep will shortly seize thy body and awaken thy soul. It will calmly period all thy troubles, and bring thee to a blessed rest. But now, if only the mere terror and gloominess of dying trouble thy thoughts, this of all other seems the most inconsiderable pretence against a willing surrender of ourselves to death. Reason hath overcome it, natural courage, yea, some men's atheism; shall not faith? Are we not ashamed to consider, what confidence and desire of death some heathens have expressed? Some that have had no pre-apprehension or belief of another state, (though there were very few of them,) and so no hope of a consequent blessedness to relieve them, have yet thought it unreasonable to disgust the thoughts of death. What wouldst thou think if thou hadst nothing but the sophisms of such to oppose to all thy dismal thoughts? I have met with one [u] arguing thus, "Death, which is accounted the most dreadful of all evils, is nothing to us, (saith he,) because while we are in being death is not yet present, and when death is present we are not in being; so that it neither concerns us, as living, nor dead; for while we are alive, it hath not touched us, when we are dead we are not.—Moreover (saith he) the exquisite knowledge of this, that death belongs not to us, makes us enjoy this mortal life with comfort; not by adding any thing to our uncertain time, but by taking away the desire of immortality." Shall they comfort themselves upon so wretched a ground, with a little sophistry, and the hope of extinguishing all desire of immortality; and shall not we, by cherishing this blessed hope of enjoying shortly an immortal glory?

Others of them have spoken magnificently of a certain contempt of this bodily life, and a not only not fearing but desiring to die, upon a fixed apprehension of the distinct and purer and immortal nature of the soul, and the preconceived hope of a consequent felicity. I shall set down some of their words, added to what have been occasionally mentioned, (amongst that plentiful variety wherewith one might fill a volume,) purposely to shame the more terrene temper of many Christians.

[u] Epicurus in Gassend. Synt.

"The soul (saith one of them [x]) is an invisible thing, and is going into another place, suitable to itself, that is noble, and pure, and invisible, even into hades, indeed, to the good and wise God, whither also my soul shall shortly go, if he see good. But this (he saith in what follows) belongs only to such a soul as goes out of the body pure, that draws nothing corporeal along with it, did not willingly communicate with the body in life, but did even fly from it, and gather up itself into itself, always meditating this one thing. A soul so affected, shall it not go to something like itself, divine, (and what is divine, is immortal and wise,) whither when it comes, it becomes blessed, free from error, ignorance, fears, and wild or enormous loves, and all other evils incident to men."

[y] One writing the life of that rare person Plotinus, says, That he seemed as if he were in some sort ashamed that he was in the body; which, (however it would less become a Christian, yet,) in one that knew nothing of an incarnate Redeemer, it discovered a refined, noble spirit. The same person speaks almost the language of the apostle, concerning his being wrapt up into the third heaven, and tells of such an alienation of the soul from the body: "That when once it finds God (whom he had before been speaking of under the name of the τὸ καλὸν, or *the beauty*) shining in upon it, it now no longer feels its body, or takes notice of its being in the body, but even forgets its own being, that it is a man, or a living creature, or any thing else whatsoever, for it is not at leisure to mind any thing else, nor doth it desire to be: yea, and having sought him out, he immediately meets it presenting itself to him. It only views him instead of itself,—and would not now change its state for any thing, not if one could give it the whole heaven in exchange."

"And elsewhere discussing, whether life in the body be good and desirable, yea or no, he concludes it to be good, not as it is a union of the soul and body, but as it may have that virtue annexed to it, by which what is really evil may be kept off. But yet, that death is a greater good:

x Plato in Phedone; from whom I adjoin what (to them that understand it) is more elegant in his own language: *ον ιδης αγανακτουντα μελλοντα αποθανεισθαι ουκ αρ φιλοσοφος αλλα τις φιλοσωματος.* Ibid. *Αγριων ερωτων.*

y Porphyrius. Plotinus Ennead. vii. lib. 6. whom, though a just admirer of him, would fain have men reckon to have been a Christian, because he writes much against the pseudo-Christian gnostics, nothing against Christianity, yet it appears not he ever made profession of it. Ennead. i. lib. 7.

that life in the body is in itself evil; but the soul is by virtue stated in goodness; not as enlivening the body with which it is compounded, but as it severs and sejoins itself from it; meaning so, as to have as little communion as possibly it can with it." To which purpose is the expression of another: "That the soul of a happy man so collects and gathers up itself out from the body while it is yet contained in it;—and that it was possessed of that fortitude, as not to dread its departure from it."[z]

Another gives this character of a good man: "That as he lived in simplicity, tranquillity, purity, not being offended at any that they believed him not to live so; he also comes to the end of his life, pure, quiet, and[a] easy to be dissolved, disposing himself without any constraint to his lot." Another is brought in speaking thus:[b] "If God should grant me to become a child again, to send forth my renewed infant cries from my cradle, and having even run out my race, to begin it again, I should most earnestly refuse it; for what profit hath this life? and how much toil! Yet I do not repent that I have lived, because I hope that I have not lived in vain. And now I go out of this life, not as out of my dwelling-house, but my inn. O blessed day! when I shall enter into that council and assembly of souls, and depart from this rude and disorderly rout and crew," &c.

I shall add another, (of a not much unlike strain[c] and rank, as either being not an open, or no constant friend to Christianity,) that discoursing who is the heir of divine things, saith, "He cannot be, who is in love with this animal, sensitive life; but only that purest mind that is inspired from above, that partakes of a heavenly and divine portion, that only despises the body," &c. with much more of like import.

Yea, so have some been transported with the desire of immortality, that (being wholly ignorant of the sin of self-murder) they could not forbear doing violence on themselves. Among the Indians,[d] two thousand years ago, were a sort of wise men, as they were called, that held it a reproach to die of age, or a disease, and were wont to burn themselves alive, thinking the flames were polluted if they came amidst them dead. The story of Cleom-

z Marin. Proclus.
a Εὐλυτος. M. Aur. Ant.
b Cato in Cicerone de Senect.
c Philo Judæus.
d Q. Curt. lib. 8.
e Cicer. Quæst. Tuscul.

brotus is famous, who hearing Plato discourse of the immortality of the soul, by the sea-side, leaped from him into the sea, that he might presently be in that state. And 'tis storied, that [f] Nero refused to put Apollonius to death, though he were very much incensed against him, only upon the apprehensions he had that he was very desirous to die, because he would not so far gratify him.

I only make this improvement of all this:—Christian principles and rules do neither hurry nor misguide men, but the end (as we have it revealed) should much more powerfully and constantly attract us. Nothing is more unsuitable to Christianity our way, nor to that blessedness the end of it, than a terrene spirit. They have nothing of the true light and impress of the gospel now, nor are they ever like to attain the vision of the blessed face of God, and the impress of his likeness hereafter, that desire it not above all things, and are not willing to quit all things else for it. And is it not a just exprobation of our earthliness and carnality, if mere philosophers and pagans should give better proof than we of a spirit erected above the world, and alienated from what is temporary and terrene? Shall their Gentilism outvie our Christianity? Methinks a generous indignation of this reproach should inflame our souls, and contribute somewhat to the refining of them to a better and more spiritual temper.

Now, therefore, O all you that name yourselves by that worthy name of Christians, that profess the religion taught by him that was not of the earth, earthly, but the Lord from heaven; you that are partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the great Apostle and High Priest of your profession, who only took our flesh that we might partake of his Spirit, bore our earthly, that we might bear his heavenly image, descended that he might cause us to ascend. Seriously bethink yourselves of the scope and end of his apostleship and priesthood. He was sent out from God to invite and conduct you to him, to bring you into the communion of his glory and blessedness. He came upon a message and treaty of peace: to discover his Father's love and win yours: to let you know how kind thoughts the God of love had conceived to you-wards; and that, however you had hated him without cause, and were bent to do so without end, he was not so affected towards you: to settle a friendship, and to admit you to the participation of his glory. Yea, he came to give an

[f] Scil. Domitianus aliquoties sic dictus. Philostr. in vit. Apoll. Tyanæi.

instance, and exemplify to the world, in his own person, how much of heaven he could make to dwell in mortal flesh; how possible he could render it to live in this world as unrelated to it; how gloriously the divine life could triumph over all the infirmities of frail humanity. And so leave men a certain proof and pledge to what perfections human nature should be improved by his grace and Spirit, in all them that should resign themselves to his conduct, and follow his steps; that heaven and earth were not so far asunder but he knew how to settle a commerce and intercourse between them; that a heavenly life was possible to be transacted here, and certain to be gloriously rewarded and perfected hereafter.

And having testified these things, he seals the testimony, and opens the way for the accomplishment of all by his death. Your heavenly Apostle becomes a Priest and a Sacrifice at once; that no doubt might remain among men of his sincerity, in what, even dying, he ceased not to profess and avow. And that by his own propitiatory blood a mutual reconciliation might be wrought between God and you; that your hearts might be won to him, and possessed with an ingenuous shame of your ever having been his enemies. And that his displeasure might ever cease towards you, and be turned into everlasting friendship and love: that eternal redemption being obtained, heaven might be opened to you, and you finally be received to the glory of God; your hearts being bent thitherward, and made willing to run through whatsoever difficulties of life or death to attain it. Do not think that Christ came into the world and died to procure the pardon of your sins, and so translate you to heaven, while your hearts should still remain cleaving to the earth. He came and returned to prepare a way for you; and then call, not drag you thither: that by his precepts, and promises, and example, and Spirit, he might form and fashion your souls to that glorious state; and make you willing to abandon all things for it. And lo! now the God of all grace is calling you by Jesus Christ unto his eternal glory. Direct then your eyes and hearts to that mark, the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. 'Tis ignominious, by the common suffrage of the civilized world, not to intend the proper business of our calling. 'Tis your calling to forsake this world and mind the other; make haste then to quit yourselves of your entanglements, of all earthly dispositions and affections. Learn to live in

this world as those that are not of it, that expect every day, and wish to leave it, whose hearts are gone already.

'Tis dreadful to die with pain and regret; to be forced out of the body; to die a violent death, and go away with an unwilling reluctant heart. The wicked is driven away in his wickedness. Fain he would stay longer, but cannot. He hath not power over the spirit, to retain the spirit, nor hath he power in death. He must away whether he will or no. And indeed much against his will. So it cannot but be, where there is not a previous knowledge and love of a better state, where the soul understands it not, and is not effectually attempered and framed to it.

O get then the lovely image of the future glory into your minds. Keep it ever before your eyes. Make it familiar to your thoughts. Imprint daily there these words, I shall behold thy face, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness. And see that your souls be enriched with that righteousness, have inwrought into them that holy rectitude, that may dispose them to that blessed state. Then will you die with your own consent, and go away, not driven, but allured and drawn. You will go, as the redeemed of the Lord, with everlasting joy upon their heads; as those that know whither you go, even to a state infinitely worthy of your desires and choice, and where 'tis best for you to be. You will part with your souls, not by a forcible separation, but by a joyful surrender and resignation. They will dislodge from this earthly tabernacle, rather as putting it off than having it rent and torn away. Loosen yourselves from this body by degrees, as we do any thing we would remove from a place where it sticks fast. Gather up your spirits into themselves. Teach them to look upon themselves as a distinct thing. Inure them to the thoughts of a dissolution. Be continually as taking leave. Cross and disprove a common maxim, and let your hearts, which they use to say are wont to die last, die first. Prevent death, and be mortified towards every earthly thing beforehand, that death may have nothing to kill but your body; and that you may not die a double death in one hour, and suffer the death of your body and of your love to it both at once. Much less that this should survive to your greater, and even incurable, misery. Shake off your bands and fetters, the terrene affections that so closely confine you to the house of your bondage. And lift up your heads in expectation of the approaching jubilee. the day of your redemption; when

you are to go out free, and enter into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; when you shall serve, and groan, and complain no longer. Let it be your continual song, and the matter of your daily praise, that the time of your happy deliverance is hastening on; that ere long you shall be absent from the body, and present with the Lord. That he hath not doomed you to an everlasting imprisonment within those close and clayey walls, wherein you have been so long shut up from the beholding of his sight and glory. In the thoughts of this, while the outward man is sensibly perishing, let the inward revive and be renewed day by day. "What prisoner would be sorry to see the walls of his prison-house (so a heathen speaks[g]) mouldering down, and the hopes arriving to him of being delivered out of that darkness that had buried him, of recovering his liberty, and enjoying the free air and light. What champion inured to hardship, would stick to throw off rotten rags, and rather expose a naked, placid, free body, to naked, placid, free air? The truly generous soul (so he a little above) never leaves the body against its will." Rejoice that it is the gracious pleasure of thy good God, thou shalt not always inhabit a dungeon, nor lie amidst so impure and disconsolate darkness; that he will shortly exchange thy filthy garments for those of salvation and praise. The end approaches. As you turn over these leaves, so are your days turned over. And as you are now arrived to the end of this book, God will shortly write *finis* to the book of your life on earth, and show you your names written in heaven, in the book of that life which shall never end.

[g] Max. Tyr. Dissert. 41.

THE END.

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From the Rev. Doctors Miller and Alexander, Professors in the Theological Seminary, Princeton, N. J.

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